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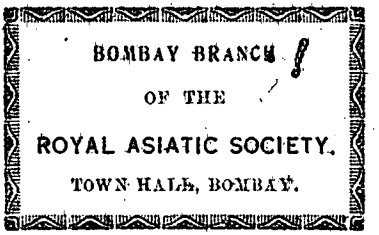

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

VOL. IV.

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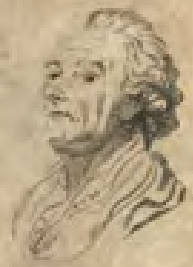
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HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

MEMOIRS

OF

THE REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

FROM

HIS MARRIAGE TO HIS DEATH:

Founded on a Variety of Authentic Documents, furnished to the Author, before the Revolution, by many eminent Statesmen and Ministers; and on the Secret Papers discovered, after the 10th of August 1792, in the Closets of the King at Versailles and the Tuileries:

BY JOHN LEWIS SOULAVIE,

THE ELDER,

COMPILER OF THE MEMOIRS OF MARSHAL DUKE OF RICHELIEU, AND OF THE MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE OF ST. SIMON.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

Accompanied with Explanatory Tables, and One Hundred and Thirteen Portraits.

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LEWIS XVI., from his earliest youth, delighted in being alone at court, or with the queen; he endeavoured to avoid the presence of his grandfather, and, when he could accomplish it, loved to converse with individuals of every profession, to hear the news of the day, and to learn the sentiments of the people relative to the affairs of his reign.

With the same views he was fond of reading foreign newspapers. Curiosity had induced

him to learn the English language; and not a day passed but he read what those islanders, in their haughtiness and independence, published in the commencement of his reign.

A young man, of the name of Masson, who had lately acquired the title of Marquis of Pezai, took advantage of this disposition, to open a secret correspondence with the king on affairs of state. This enterprising personage was brother to the beautiful and famous madame de Cassini, who for some years past had left no means untried to attain celebrity. He was born without fortune, but, like his sister, possessed a kind of wit, an interesting figure, and a versatility of genius, adapted to acquire it. Madame de Cassini, towards the latter part of the reign of the late king, had made herself conspicuous as well by her intrigues as by her lovers. She was visited by ministers, generals, and people of fashion; she undertook to procure places, rail against ministers, and extol or blame the measures of government; she endeavoured even to aspire to greater importance by a presentation at court, and solicited that favour, with all her interest; when Lewis XV., who possessed great politeness and respect, as well as weakness, for the sex, decided the affair in these terms: "There are but too many intrigues here already; madame de Cassini shall not be presented."

During the remainder of the reign of the late king, madame de Cassini, by her licentious and coquetish manner of life, contrived to supply the deficiency of fortune. M... M... M... M... M... M... and de Maillebois, were her paramours, and in this distinguished society the marquis of Pezai acquired the elements of intrigue, which he knew how to disguise and adorn, by applying himself to literature, affairs of administration, and the polite arts. Dorat, his intimate friend, who had written some pleasant little poems, admired at the time, infused elegance into his verses, and corrected them. Epistles, mock heroics, and madrigals, dressed in a light and tender style, were his best known productions. He composed the *Soirées Helvétiques*. His friend Dorat was neither ambitious nor intriguing like himself; but Pezai united with the poetic art such a degree of ambition, that he was heard to say to this friend, and to a celebrated woman who received the visits of both, "I will engage, that with the assistance of madame B. we can govern, if we wish it, both France and Europe, by making verses."

The marquis of Pezai, tormented by his ambition, wrote on this occasion to almost all the kings of Europe, on the constitution, administration, industry, and commerce of their states. He did more: he made them all an offer of his

services; so much had he flattered himself that he should enjoy the confidence of a king. "It is very modest, truely," replied Frederic, "in a raw youth like you, to give lessons to an old monarch." The other sovereigns returned the marquis no answer.

The phrensy of celebrity, and the desire of becoming minister, reigning in the breast of Pezai, he was incessantly occupied in researches into the administration and government of France. M. de Maillebois, the lover of madame de Cassini, his sister, gave him a sight of his papers. Among them he found the memoirs of the war in Italy in 1741, the plans and designs of the sieges, with the encampments, marches, and sieges of the French army, from which he had composed a manuscript, entitled *the Campaigns of Maillebois*, which the king caused afterwards to be printed, with a superb map. Of this work we shall hereafter speak. Madame de Montberry, who loved Pezai, supplied him, in the expectation of his promotion as well as her own, with the means of living, and introduced him to the most distinguished society.

In this situation of affairs Lewis XV. died. From that instant the marquis, and his intimate acquaintance, found means, by the inexperience of the young king, to open the road to a brilliant fortune. They conceived the pro-

ject of a secret correspondence with Lewis XVI., and bribed a servant of the little apartments to place the letters in a chamber, where the king was every day in the habit of retiring to read.

To engage the attention of the king, the marquis of Pezai represented himself, without signing his letter, as being allied to the most distinguished literary characters, and the most opulent financiers. He pretended, that he associated with Englishmen of the first distinction; boasted of being on good terms with ladies of the highest quality; and above all, that literature and the fine arts engaged the greatest part of his attention. After this preamble, he offered the king such services as his situation enabled him to perform, and asked permission, to transmit periodically the result of his hebdomadal observations on the affairs of Europe, the general transactions in France, and on private matters, which might be deemed worthy of the monarch's attention. He renounced every idea of reward for these labours. All the recompence he desired, was that of being able to serve his master with probity and candour. In order to exhibit proofs of it, he inclosed the first number of his correspondence, which he laid at the feet of the king, entreating him, that, if these labours were agreeable to his majesty,

he would signify it by holding a handkerchief in his hand, during the elevation of the host, on the first Sunday of the next month, and by quitting it, when that ceremony was at an end.

In the first correspondence, Pezai administered such ingenious and well-adapted incense to the king, as could not fail to be agreeable to a diffident prince, who wished to avoid it. He extolled the king for his timid and ingenuous modesty; and assured him, that, on this account, he was extremely beloved by the whole nation: he animadverted on his confidence in his ministers, and said, that it was the desire of the French to be governed by their monarchs in the tone of authority. He added, that Lewis XVI. was too much governed by others; that his people wished to find in him the firmness of the good king Henry; that his natural talents would ensure him success; and that he inherited from the house of Bourbon, and from the dauphiness his mother, such qualities as must produce extraordinary events. The king, he said, had acquired great knowledge by secret and unperceived study, and France would be exceedingly proud, if she conceived herself governed by the direct acts of his majesty's will. He added, that the French would even cherish the errors of their sovereign; and then cited his

conjugal virtues, so compatible with French ideas and amiable manners. He praised the perfections of the queen, and foretold a speedy recompence of their combined virtues.

Having thus spoken of the chief of the state, he announced the periodical correspondence he wished to establish, on princes contemporary with the king, on the principal men of the kingdom, on ministers, parliaments, prelates, generals, intendants, and men of letters, promising, that the king should be informed, without quitting his cabinet, of the transactions of the first societies in Paris, whose thoughts and principles it was essential for him to know.

This, and the following letters, pleased the king so much, that he gave orders to M. de Sartines, then minister of the police, to discover and point out to him the author.

Suspicion fell, at first, on many persons known at court, who assured M. de Sartines, that they had never taken the liberty of writing to the king. At length, confining himself to five or six, M. de Sartines received the king's order to sound them, and read to them himself the outlines of the correspondence, in order to discover, if he could, in any one of them, the expressions, manner, and opinions of the writer. M. de Pezai was thus found out, and acknowledged himself author of the letter. From this

time he began to entertain the most sanguine hopes of future greatness, and flattered himself, that he should become in reality minister, as he had projected. He imagined he could not fail to make a brilliant fortune, and procure for his friends the employment which they so earnestly sought after.

Mr. Necker, madame de Cassini, and the secret society of this coalition, triumphed over the late king's neglect of them. The mysterious correspondence with Lewis XVI. continued for several years. They were ignorant, however, that there existed another, written with opposite views, by M. de Vergennes. That of the marquis of Pezai was composed of some schemes of public utility, and decisions the most partial both as to persons and things. He wanted that degree of foresight, experience, and succession of ideas and circumstances, which are necessary to judge of the operations of a great empire; but, notwithstanding these defects, the correspondence was spirited, agreeable, and calculated to please a king, anxious to contemplate an anticipated history of his measures. The marquis obtained from the young prince the indirect confession, that his first correspondence was acceptable, and that he was permitted to continue it. Confident of success, Pezai begged the king to stay in the

gallery, on his return from chapel, near a recess, which he pointed out, and where he said he should place himself to see his majesty pass. Lewis, curious to be acquainted with him personally, received him kindly, led him into his cabinet, and introduced him to M. de Maurepas, as an interesting young man whom he wished to promote. M. de Maurepas, astonished, confessed to the king, that M. de Pezai was his god-son. The jealousy of Maurepas was instantly awakened; he saw with concern that the king granted him his confidence in state affairs; and was not ignorant, that Lewis had encouraged an extensive, periodical, and unknown correspondence. He observed, that the prince was often directed by secret impressions and opinions, and felt himself hurt, that the confidence of the monarch should be divided between himself and an obscure young man, a person entirely unknown, and, above all, a young poet. He dissimulated, however, his sentiments, and loaded Pezai with caresses. Notwithstanding, one day he inadvertently said, "You are, then, in concert with the king! You are in concert with the king, M. de Pezai?" And at another time, with an affected raillery, and in his presence, "Here is a young man, that wishes to govern my wife and me."

M. de Pezai had contributed, by his corre-

spondence, to the expulsion of the abbé Terray from the ministry, with disgrace. He had been for some time attached to Mr. Necker, and represented, both to Mr. Necker himself and to Lewis XVI., the opinions of that already celebrated financier as necessary to the restoration of the state. He was the declared enemy of Turgot, and was zealous for the elevation of the opulent Genevan, from whom he received pecuniary succours. An admirer of madame de Montbarrey, near relation to M. Maurepas, he assisted in making an injured husband director-general of war, a title created in favour of M. de Montbarrey.

It was at this time that the king granted M. de Pezai the honours of the royal printing-office, for the edition of the *Memoirs of Maillebois*, which he had the charge of compiling. This work is scarcely any thing more than a selection and translation of Italian works; but it contains what a French general ought to know, as useful and expedient for the conduct of our troops in Italy. A magnificent map accompanied this production of Pezai. It was a master-piece of geographical charts, the plates of which have been melted down by the revolutionists. M. de Pezai made use of it to give the king some lessons in the military art, which followed the secret correspondence, and promoted the same end.

In the course of a year, the marquis of Pezai succeeded in making two ministers, M. de Montbarrey and Mr. Necker; and he who commenced with declaring to the king, that he would accept no favour, procured for himself the office of inspector-general of the coasts, with a salary of sixty-thousand livres: he also enforced the payment of thirty thousand livres which were due to his father for wine. The plans of Mr. Necker, presented to M. Maurepas and the king, appeared satisfactory. "The proud Necker," said M. de Meilhan, intendant of Valenciennes, and a particular enemy of this minister, "wrapped up in a great coat, often came to M. de Pezai's house, concealed in a hackney coach, waiting for the arrival of the favourite from Versailles, to be informed of what he had done in his favour."

Such were the primary means by which the plans of Mr. Necker were developed.

CHAP. II.

Elevation of Mr. Necker to the Ministry—He deviates from the Course of his Predecessors—He courts the Favour of the People, instead of relying on that of the Great.—General Principles of his Administration—Character of his Writings—General Opinions of the Partisans of the Administration anterior to that of Mr. Necker—Character of the illustrious Families in the Administration—Mr. Necker sets up against them his Systems and Plans

MINISTER of the republic of Geneva, at the court of Lewis XVI., and connected with many members of the diplomatic body, Mr. Necker was naturally in the road which leads to the advancement of men of large fortune and superior talents. He was intimately acquainted with Pezai, who still continued his correspondence directly with the king, and he communicated some ideas on the amelioration of the finances to M. Maurepas, with a promise to liberate the state, and provide for the expences of war, if a war should take place. It was immediately determined, that Mr. Necker should assist M. de Clugny, minister of finances, and that the direction of the royal treasury, with the different operations relative to loans and credit, should be entrusted to his care.

At the death of M. de Clugny, about the latter end of the month of October 1776, it was observed, that, since Colbert, there had been twenty-five ministers of finance in France, and that no one of them had died in office. Taboureau des Réaux, counsellor of state, an honest and enlightened man, was in the list of those to be preferred, as well as M. de Vaisnes, first clerk of the finances.

The king nominated the former, and committed the management of the treasury to the famous banker, Mr. Necker. His direction of the India Company, his disputes with that company, the force of his arguments against the system of M. Turgot, and his eulogium on Colbert, at the head of which he seemed to have disdained to place his name, had given him a great reputation. He engaged to establish order in the finances, without concussion, and furnish immediately forty millions of ready money.

M. Taboureau, perceiving that his powers were in effect subordinate to Mr. Necker, demanded permission to resign; it was granted; and Mr. Necker, wishing on his side to be sole master of his measures, was named director-general of the finances.

Become sole administrator, Mr. Necker excited the enthusiasm of the public by the nature of his operations. In each of them was disco-

vered something novel and striking; their object being to alter the system of administration, and infuse a new spirit into the direction of affairs.

The most remarkable part of his transactions was the direct opposition of his measures to those of the ministers who had preceded him. The latter had reposed their credit and power on the favour of the great men of the state, and on favourites. Mr. Necker, on the contrary, did not rely on such props for support, but sought it amongst that description of the king's subjects, who were the most distant from the throne. Mr. Necker confided in the favour and confidence of the people; and in this instance resembling M. Turgot, he could not be agreeable to the clergy, or to the nobility, so adverse to the personal interests of the Genevese minister. The clergy murmured at the choice of a protestant, "I will have done with him," said M. de Maurepas to an archbishop offended at his nomination, "if you will engage to pay the national debt."

On Mr. Necker's succeeding to the ministry, he found himself a stranger to the affairs of administration; but his mind was ever busy, he sought every where for information, listened to every one's advice, and collected all the hints that were offered. The five years of his administration were spent in the most indefatigable

study. No consideration could induce him to abandon it, neither gaming, amusements, ideas of fortune, nor the usual society of people of the court.

The character of his writings already announced a revolution. The state of the republic of letters admitted of no other principle than that of philosophy. Accordingly they breathed throughout the language of humanity; they exhibited an extreme sensibility, a cast of republicanism, a style analogous to that of Rousseau, and a brilliant imagination: they were adorned by figures and a sentimental turn, unknown in the works of administration, and which distinguished them from all other books of the same nature. Never before had the principal administrators of a monarchy exposed their operations to the public opinion, because the progress of power conducted the court to increasing abuses, while the administrative steps of Mr. Necker led the state on to reformation and a revolution.

"Enlightened and impartial posterity" said the opposite party, at the head of which we may place the intendant of Valenciennes "will be surprised to find, that an intelligent people could so far deceive themselves as to regard Mr. Necker as the greatest of administrators. It will be astonished, that his contemporaries had not asked themselves, What canals has he

dug? What branch of commerce has he revived? What duties has he abolished or modified? What edifices has he erected? He has written some high-sounding phrases; but where are his works? No traces will be found in the capital, in the provinces, in the ports, or in any useful establishment, to consecrate his memory. His writings contain some general ideas and futile projects, but neither erudition nor profound reflexion on the administration are to be seen in them; and it is something remarkable, that, in his three volumes relating to the finances, not a single quotation of facts or former opinions is to be found. It is plain, that this minister has followed the sudden impulse of his imagination, and that he has confined himself to the moral and political side of affairs, which require only, to be understood, a little acuteness of mind, without any of the requisite information of an administrator. In this sense alone Mr. Necker, a sensible man, and often an eloquent writer, is deserving of praise; but the misguided nation has confounded the merit of the minister with that of the author. Those who are able to distinguish one from the other, must perceive, that he was acquainted neither with history, the principles of finance and commerce, nor the theory of imposts. It is easily discovered, that he has only endeavoured

to impose on the better class by the brilliancy of his phrases, and deceive the people by an affectation of sensibility. Like authors, who compose pieces for actors, and are successful because the parts are conformable to the talents of those who represent them."

This conclusion, drawn by an intendant, is extremely severe. It is however certain, that Mr. Necker, in his operations, surpassed the opinions of the age, and seemed as if he was administering to a different kingdom from France, and in a century distant from the eighteenth. He overturned the established doctrines, instead of creating others. The administration had been formed by the genius of Richelieu, Colbert, and others, and firmly cemented for the maintenance of authority. The ministry, since the demise of those great personages, had observed so faithfully their maxims, that the administration was nothing more than a mass of exalted wisdom preserved within the limits of tradition. About fifty families, distinguished by the name of the supreme magistracy, were the guardians of it*; and such

* I shall religiously preserve, in this history, the names of some illustrious families in the administration, as d'Agues-seau, Trudaine, Montarau, Turgot, d'Ormesson, Amelot, Lamoignon, Pelletier, Boullogne, Joly de Fleury, Lescalopier, Bernage, de Cotte, Machault, Berulle, Bochard de Sarton, d'Aligre,

was the form and regularity of the customs, that one vigorous mind might preserve inviolate our ancient institutions. Besides, these fifty families possessed in administration a timidity and fearfulness of such innovations essential to their preservation.

Mr. Necker, on the contrary, appeared fearful of treading in the steps of others. His imagination, the scourge of the ancient French administration, was the soul of his measures. He complains in his writings, that the maxims of government did not permit every minister to be chosen from those classes in which merit and talents might be found; that only one hundred families enjoyed, in this respect, the confidence of their sovereign, and that these were promoted according to seniority. Mr. Necker objected, that in France, where the fertility of the soil and the prosperity of institutions triumphed over the errors of government, they should not be subject to the exclusion of all but a few families. It was precisely this prosperity and this natural activity which the circumscription was meant to restrain.

Mr. Necker moreover pretended, that the national character of the French was less ad-

d'Aligre, de Gourgues, Voisins, Molé, Portail, Rolland, Blondel, Senozan, Angran, Nicolay, Barentin, Sully, Colbert, Richelieu, Villeroy, Fleury, &c.

apted to affairs of administration than to any other kind of talent, notwithstanding the experience of several centuries attested our particular success in that department. He supposed, that it required a sort of tardiness, perseverance, and uniformity, which were repugnant to the activity of the character of Frenchmen. This consideration had undoubtedly induced him to secure a portion of the public administration in the hands of provincial administrators, that would form a code of doctrines invulnerable to the variation of systems, and to the fickleness of the ministers of finance. This was exactly confiding in people of no stability, and taking the office from those families who had, as it were, hereditarily preserved it. It was snatching it from the aristocracy, to consign it to the democracy, without reflecting, that, in many parts, the syndics of provinces were the real administrators; whilst the bishops, noblemen, and municipal officers, who represented the commons, were total strangers to provincial regulations.

Mr. Necker lamented the variations of administrative principles, and attributed them to the frequent change of ministry. He conceived that this instability resulted from some defect in the representative body of the nation, in which the measures of administration were discussed,

He seemed ignorant, that, in states, where the executive authority is tempered by legislative power, if the former was not restrained by the latter, perpetual jarrings must be expected; and he overlooked, that the principles of his administration were exceptions to these received opinions.

CHAP. III.

Mr. Necker's Doctrine concerning Proprietaries and Citizens without Property.—Of M. Turgot, Brigadier of the King's Armies, and Brother to the Minister of that Name.—Of Messrs. de Condorcet, de Fougeroux, and de Bondaroi, of the Academy of Arts.—Examination of the Doctrine of Mr. Necker —M. Turgot sets up his against it—He gives me the Historical Memoirs of his Brother, to peruse them, and make Extracts for the History.—Emulation between Messrs. Necker and Turgot to reform the French Monarchy.

WHEN Mr. Necker was made director of the finances, by the death of M. de Taboureau, and excited, in 1779, so astonishing a sensation, I was present in a company that felt extremely offended at a passage in one of his publications. It appeared to me, that this production was one of the principal grievances of Turgot and his family, and some economists, against Mr. Necker. I perceived, in their emotion, the most violent chagrin. The chevalier Turgot was with M. de Condorcet, M. de Fougeroux, and M. de Bondaroi, all three belonging to the Society of Arts. The two first were very warm in their assertions. I possessed the modesty natural to my age. "Unhappy nation," exclaimed the chevalier Turgot, "thou wilt never recover from the disasters which Necker is

preparing for thee!" "We shall come off with a system similar to that of Law," cried Condorcet. The timid Fougeroux, of a reserved character, was silent. I listened, and on my return home arranged the result of this interesting conversation, to be inserted in these Memoirs.

The emotions of the chevalier Turgot and M. de Condorcet were very different from the style at that time observed in large companies, which were constantly calm. I asked the reason of so much uneasiness, that appeared to me exaggerated. The chevalier Turgot, raising his voice still higher, which before was quite distinct enough, and taking hold of my arm, said, in the manner of Diderot: "Young man, whom we respect, look here and read." At the same time opening the last chapter of Mr. Necker's *Legislation of Grain*, he continued, "What have we to expect from a minister, that declaims with so much fury against such a class of society as the proprietaries, in favour of those who possess nothing? Shall we wait to see renewed in France the scenes of the Gracchi?

"Almost every civil institution," said the chevalier Turgot, reading Mr. Necker's work, "has been established for proprietaries. We are alarmed, on opening the code of laws, at discovering every where proofs of this truth. One would suppose that a small number of

men, after having divided the earth among them, had enacted laws of union and security against the multitude, in the same manner as they would set up fences in the midst of forests, to defend themselves from wild beasts; for we may venture to assert, that after the laws of property, justice, and liberty, had been established, scarcely any thing was done for the most numerous class of citizens. Have they not reason to say, What are your laws of property to us? we are possessed of nothing. Your laws of justice? we have nothing to protect. Your laws of liberty? if we work not, to-morrow we die. It is not alone on the justice of monarchs that their beneficence depends; it is also on their talents, on the paternal cares, which neither law nor justice have pointed out, but which are marked in letters of fire on every breast alive to feelings of humanity. O you that govern! let it ever be remembered, that the greatest part of mankind were not consulted in the composition of the laws, and that their weakness and misery incessantly claim your protection. The proprietaries only require liberty and justice; those who possess nothing demand your humanity, and political laws to balance the preponderance of property. It is by the wisdom of the corn laws that you more immediately insure their happiness. May reflexion

never cease to exert itself on this important object! May it be productive, ere long, of those irrefragable truths, which, insuring the repose and prosperity of the state, become the safeguard of the weak against the powerful and wealthy!"

After this reading, M. de Condorcet and the chevalier Turgot recommenced their censures on Mr. Necker, opposing the system of Turgot, ex-comptroller-general, to that of the present director of the finances. "My brother's measures were very different," said the chevalier Turgot; "he conceived, that the people without property are the basis of society and civilization. Not a power exists to which this class is not as necessary as the foundations are requisite to an edifice. Without this particular class the spirit of commerce would be insufficient to excite speculation. The ingenious man designs his plans in cities and in the fields, and his labourers execute them. The rich proprietary advances large sums of money, and the poor, under his auspices, increase them. Property was made the basis of my brother's administration. On property he has established his plans and views for a more social organization. Nations were established by property; they flourish in proportion as they feel the force and power of the state; and they are devastated and ruined by the opinion which Mr. Necker has promulgated.

We here behold an imaginary philosopher, emerging from a republic, whose individuals inclose their property in a port-folio of six ounces weight; but the speculations of a great nation must not be treated so lightly. Reflect well, M. Soulavie, on our answers to the factious work of Mr. Necker, published at a time when France was torn by sedition, to which he could be no stranger; and if you write the history of the times, observe religiously to produce a faithful account of my brother's administration. I have given orders that you shall have his memorandums; and I will guarantee their authenticity, by signing them." The chevalier Turgot soon after delivered to me his brother's papers.

This discourse had been pronounced with a degree of warmth; and as the chevalier Turgot, in some anterior conferences, had not been explicit in the causes of insurrection about corn, I asked him, in order to profit by his present emotion, to enter into a detail of that circumstance. "The cause originates in the ambition of Mr. Necker," said he, "who was anxious to procure the dismissal of my brother, and occupy his place. You have now in your hands indisputable proofs of it. Observe in what haste Mr. Necker published his book on the subject of corn, for the purpose of ruining my brother.

" The censor approved his book the 18th of April, 1775.

" The king's privilege is dated the 19th.

" The privilege was registered the 27th of April.

" The publication of the book against my brother was on the 28th.

" The riot at Paris [illegible] the month of May. On the 20th of April it broke out at Dijon.

" Thus, you see, in the space of ten days he was enabled to dispense with formalities that often require several months to accomplish. The work was printed before the privilege was granted; we have been informed, that they were obliged to cut and divide the copy, in order to finish it in as short a time as possible, so important was deemed its appearance in Paris, before the intelligence of the riots, already begun at Dijon, could be communicated to the public. Mr. Necker himself directed the corn riots; but be cautious and prudent: my brother refused to sign his detention in the Bastille. Mr. Necker, more ungenerous, issued *lettres-de-cachet* against his enemies, even against M. de Lauraguais, who, in his writings, defended his property against the attacks of Mr. Necker."

By speaking so vehemently, the eyes of the chevalier Turgot were inflamed, but M. de Con-

dorcet exhibited the smile of calmness and reflexion. The chevalier's discourse, however, deserves some serious consideration. Mr. Necker is attacked therein by an enemy, well known to be such.

The ex-minister Turgot, and his brother the brigadier, were as strongly inclined to a reformation in the French monarchy as Mr. Necker. The two brothers were as open in their declarations to this effect as Mr. Necker had been in his Memoirs. M. Turgot, the officer, was ingenious, a good judge of politics, incredulous as to religious opinions, but a declared enemy to the dissipations and follies of the court which succeeded his brother's retreat. Leagued with Condorcet, no means were left untried by both of them to thwart the maxims and principles of Necker; and they contributed to the publication of a great number of pamphlets, which in no small degree served to accelerate the dissatisfaction of parties against his administration.

This separate emulation of two philosophical parties for the reform of the monarchy was very remarkable. I compare it to the emulation of revolutionary parties of the constituent assembly, in which all the revolutionary factions and families assembled under the same roof, and made it resound with motions, in which they appeared to vie with each other, to accomplish the

destruction of the firmest and most ancient monarchy of Europe. The enmities of Necker and Turgot, their emulation, and the hatred which resulted from it, their activity in the same measures, and their anxiety to do the most and the best, animated these two personages, who, in the midst of their reputation, cordially detested each other. Mr. Necker, however, was reserved in all his writings on Turgot; while, on the contrary, the two Turgots vented against Mr. Necker every sentiment of hatred and disdain. Read their works. Condorcet published two or three of them every year.

CHAP. IV.

Operations of Mr. Necker during the first Year of his Administration.

MR. Necker, from the very commencement of his ministry, exhibited sufficient proofs of his views of reformation.

The subaltern administration felt the first blow, which he was resolved to strike at every institution established by his predecessors.

The farming of the posts was taken into the administration, and the leases dissolved.

The receivers of the domains were suppressed.

The intendants of the finances were annihilated.

The administrators of the lottery were reduced to six.

And Pelisseri, an author who had written some criticisms on his operations, was thrown into the Bastille.

The dismissal of M. Trudaine, intendant of the finances, created Mr. Necker some powerful enemies in the supreme magistracy, who have never forgiven him. M. Trudaine had gained such a reputation for probity and delicacy in his employment, as it was not easy to assail;

and Mr. Necker possessed only a name which the supreme magistracy could be moved to render ridiculous. It was in vain that M. Trudaine was appointed by Mr. Necker in reforming the intendants, to the direction of the roads and bridges of the kingdom. Mr. Necker had deprived him of acting with the king, from a fear that he might militate against his reformations. Besides which, another cause of offence was the contentious committee of finance, which Mr. Necker had established.

Some days after, Mr. Necker attacked the administration of the lottery. To execute the plans he had formed against them, he sent for the the parties, and said: "The king has discovered some abuses in your administration: he accuses no one, but he conceives that you are too numerous by half. The king gives you the liberty of settling it among yourselves; you must choose any six of your number, to continue the affairs of administration." They were immediately reduced.

The operation relative to the extension of the twentieths, on a simple ministerial letter, stirred up against Mr. Necker the principal proprietaries. Former ministers, who had attempted this measure, had lost their places; but Mr. Necker bore up, without danger, against the resentment of the parliaments, which were inter

ested in stopping the progress of an act, that placed them on a level with every proprietary, without distinction. The parliament of Normandy made vigorous remonstrances, and were ordered to appear before the king, to answer for its proceedings.

Each of these reformations was violently protested against; the other ministers disapproved of this spirit of innovation in Mr. Necker, and Monsieur began, from that year, 1777, to take a part against the director-general. The reformed directors of finances, who had not accepted of other employments, proclaimed, that Mr. Necker would neither have council nor inspectors, but employed servile and removeable clerks: and the superior finance, who held M. Trudaine above all in considerable veneration, either spoke of Mr. Necker in a tone of irony on his reformations, or with contempt and disdain of his person. Messrs. Moreau de Beaumont, Trudaine, Bouvart de Fourqueux, de Boulogne, Boutin, d'Ormesson, and Amelot, filled their employments with probity, and some of them so ably, as to reflect honour on their talents. Moureau and Bouvart accepted places in the contentious committee, but the rest retired with concealed resentment.

The council of state also disapproved in secret of his operations. Sartines began to express

himself publicly against Mr. Necker; the count de Vergennes, who condemned him the most, talked of him with more reserve; and as to M. Maurepas, he not only began to repent of his choice, but was heard to say, that he believed himself fallen from Turgotmancy into necromancy.

CHAP. V.

Fall of M. de Pezai—Stratagems of Messrs. Maurepas and de Sartines, to ruin this Favourite of Lewis XVI. and Friend of Mr. Necker.

THE jealousy of Messrs. de Maurepas and de Sartines against M. de Pezai, the king's favourite and the friend of Mr. Necker, increased every day. His connexion with the latter aggravated these ministers the more, as they could not fail to be uneasy at the fame of the Genevese director, and of his financial and political operations. Sartines and Maurepas were determined to ruin Pezai, but in an imperceptible and underhand manner. He had obtained the place of inspector-general of the coasts: he was persuaded to visit them, and he treated the military and intendants with haughtiness. This was a kind of exile, that silenced his partisans, and opened the mouths of his envious enemies, who were secretly prompted by Maurepas. He was scarcely set off, when they accused him of being weak and trifling, and continually disturbed by scenes of adventure and rashness. M. de Sartines, who feared his ambition, wrote to him while he was on his journey, to dis-

continue his functions, and stop at Pezai, the place from which he had taken his name and title. This sudden appearance of disgrace threw him into a state of terror and vexation, and he was seized with a dangerous illness. The arrival of couriers from M. Necker, to search his papers, and others from M. de Sartines, to seize them, rendered his illness mortal. M. de Maurepas obtained his projects, memorandums, and correspondence, active and passive, with the king, and resolved, at the sight of the notes from Mr. Necker, to withdraw the favour of Lewis XVI. from that minister, and to take such measures as would be sure to have effect.

Thus did Lewis XVI. deliver up his favourite and his correspondence to the secret resentment and malice of Sartines and Maurepas. This trait began to develope the weakness of the prince. Pezai's letters, frequently composed or revised by Necker, had been his chief delight; he sacrificed these letters and their authors to the restless jealousy of two ministers, who had for some time past concerted the ruin of Pezai.

These events confirmed also what had already been conceived of the address of Sartines and Maurepas. The definitive scene of Pezai's disgrace was contrived to be in a province far from the king, the court, and Mr. Necker, in order to accomplish their designs without opposition

or tumult. Lewis XV., who was also weak and easily persuaded, would never have abandoned his favourite correspondence to the discretion of his mistresses or ministers. The conduct of his successor was a lesson for Vergennes and Maurepas. They endeavoured assiduously to conceal this weakness of the monarch, well aware that it might become the radical defect of the state which they had to govern and support.

Opposition of Mr. [illegible] to the Expences of War—He asks the King to make him responsible for the Details and Applications—He censures the Wasteful Spirit of the Department of Finance—He approves of the Credit of the States—He rests his Opinion on the Possibility of converting four or five Millions of Yearly Revenue to five Millions of Capital—He censures the Administration anterior to his own.—General Principles of Mr. Necker on the Administration of Finance.

MR. NECKER was no sooner entrusted with the finances, than he desired the plans of each minister's expenditure to be laid before him. This was like placing himself at the head of government, or at least managing the affairs of state by a kind of negative means. Let us hear the discourse of the director-general on this subject; it contains some curious details on the king's connexion with his minister of finance.

" M. de Maurepas having desired me to communicate to your majesty my observations on the note remitted by the war department, I have hastily thrown some ideas together on that subject.

" They have proposed to your majesty to sanction new augmentations of expence, but

they have given no satisfactory reasons for so doing.

" They talk of expenditures, without specifying or detailing to what purpose, but in a vague way; therefore, if your majesty had sanctioned this demand, some considerable expences would have been made, without any sufficient cause; and as, notwithstanding, every operation was specified, except what it would cost, the war department would have had your majesty's order to proceed, and the payment of the expences which its operations would incur must have been sooner or later indispensable.

" It is therefore with the greatest wisdom that your majesty's approbation has been suspended; affairs of such consequence cannot be decided on by a simple sketch; and this observation naturally leads me to reflect on a scheme of administration, by which alone your majesty's finances can be conducted with order, and, consequently, the happiness of your reign, and the continuance of your majesty's power, be ensured.

" It is against every kind of principle, that the expenditure should be determined separately from the means necessary to provide for it.— In effect, if it were only necessary to adopt a plan of politics, and draw a representation of a fleet or an army, there is no sovereign but would

be able to procure the means of conquering the world; for he might easily find ministers to make combinations and form the necessary plans. But, it is on the alliance of speculation with the means of execution, it is on their connexion, that depend the difficulties as well as the knowledge of the statesman.

"In vain would the ministers of the kings of Sweden or Denmark adopt measures for raising a numerous army; in vain, even, would the emperor or the king of Prussia, although possessed of extensive dominions, attempt to accomplish it, if, at the same time, they did not introduce the most rigid economy, and renounce every other object of expence.

"Your majesty, richer and more powerful than any other sovereign of Europe, has also greater regulations of finance to observe in consequence of the situation of the kingdom; your majesty, with reason, would desire to establish your power both by sea and land, while the other sovereigns of Europe have only one of those expences to defray.

"In the mean time nearly the third part of your majesty's revenue is consumed in paying interest for debts. An ancient magnificence in the expences of the court and in the houses of the princes, the management of money concerns in the department of finance, a general remiss-

ness, a want of union, excessive and accumulated salaries, an incredible list of pensions of which no precedent can be found; all these objects absorb still a great part of your majesty's revenues.

"In fine, there is another sort of force, which often elevates a power of the second order to a level with the first; and this force is credit. It must be undoubtedly great, as it imparts the means of converting four or five millions of annual revenue into a hundred millions of capital. Now, this credit is considerably impaired, if not totally destroyed. We cannot dissimulate, that it has required some finesse and pains to supply your majesty, for two years past, with considerable sums for the use of the navy; but there are bounds for every thing, and it is next to impossible, in so short a time, to obliterate the effects of fifteen years of peace, during which confidence and credit have been more abused than in times of war, and that in expending, imposing, and borrowing, without rule or measure, and without attention to the performance of promises.

"This combination of diverse circumstances is sufficient to convince your majesty, that, although the richest king in Europe, you cannot dispense with constantly making the expences

of government keep pace with its free resources; particularly, as each minister can see no further than his own department, and for they are not employed in establishing the revenues, such difficulties are unknown to them, and the misery of the people can never reach their ears. Having, therefore, only to consider the necessity of their own expenditure, it is not surprising, that they continually increase it; for there are few expences that have not a favourable side, considered separately from the means we must take to provide for them.

"It is, therefore, by a view of the whole at once, that wise and salutary determinations can alone be made; and it is because this principle has been constantly neglected in the preceding reign, that the finest kingdom in the universe does not enjoy its complete resources. Ministers who possessed the confidence of the king, governing the state, the army, and navy, created at pleasure every project of expence, nominated weak comptrollers-general, who, vain of their employment, and willing to support it, hesitated not to raise money for that purpose, sometimes by loans, sometimes by imposts, and sometimes by bankruptcy. The natural prosperity of France, from which they might have drawn so much importance, only served

to repair, in some degree, the effect of all these faults.

" At the end of all these disorders, your majesty has declared war; but, if the minister of state, the minister of war, and the minister of the marine, concert their own projects, without reflecting on the means of executing them, it is impossible to foresee the consequence.

" It appears to me therefore indispensable, to establish at least a beginning regulation for that purpose. This regulation may require, that at a given time, for instance, by the month of October, each minister shall make out his plan of operations; that these plans shall be sent to your majesty with an account of the sums they will require; that they shall be immediately communicated to the administrator of finance, to concert with your majesty the beſt means of providing for them; and, then, comparing the advantages which may be derived from the execution of the plans with the inconvenience of providing the means, your majesty will give directions accordingly.

" By this method we shall arrive at some certainty; but, without it, your majesty may, some time or other, experience severe mortification; and, with the sentiments of probity and justice, which compose the essence of your majesty's

character, you may be obliged to submit to those sources of certain ruin, forced expedients and usury; and your majesty will never behold established that desirable order, which alone can ensure tranquillity within, and power without."

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Necker's first Examination of the Funds.—Invention of a Lottery.—View of the Minority of Parliament.—Causes of Déprémesnil's hatred of the Director-General—Emulation between the Director and Déprémesnil for a Reform.—Observations on the Measures of the Department of Finance deposed in the Parliamentary Registers.—Registering of the Edict of Loans; completed before it was registered.—Rivalship of the Financiers and Bankers.

SCARCELY had Mr. Necker obtained the direction of the royal treasury, than he began to examine the state of the funds. He proposed, on the 7th of January 1777, to raise twenty-four millions by loan in the form of a lottery; a part of which was to be re-imbursed in money to the lenders as chance should decide, and the rest to be converted into annuities.

Mr. Necker declared, in his preambles, that the state was already oppressed by annuities to the amount of forty millions. The edict was, however, registered. It would have met with no obstacle, if Déprémesnil, who happened not to be on good terms with Mr. Necker, on account of the affairs of the India company, had not objected to it. Kept out of parliament, a

long time, by the minister, who feared the turbulence of his character, Déprémesnil had, at length, succeeded in obtaining a seat as counsellor, and manifested his resentment against government every time the registering of an edict gave him an opportunity of making political observations. He opposed, therefore, the project of the loan; and, since that first declaration of his opposition, never ceased to resist the operations of the director of finance. He maintained, that this creation of yearly revenue was immediately connected with the interests of the nation, and that the company was not adequate to it: he declared, that the present situation of affairs required the convocation of the states-general, because the nation was oppressed by a multitude of impositions approved by the parliament of M. de Maupeou.

This opinion of the minority scarcely obtained any voices. The majority was calm on the subject of the loan, as well as on that of the convocation of the states-general; and it was an admonition not a little remarkable to Mr. Necker, who already entertained in his mind the idea of this convocation, who had plans ready prepared for it, and might conclude, that this sentiment met the ideas and wishes of the whole nation; but the declaration of the anticipated and immediate desires of a turbulent mi-

nority, in and out of parliament, in whose projects he secretly participated, was then as ill-timed as their intentions were badly combined. He might be certain within himself, that the state was now acquainted with the desires of the minority; that, in the execution, the majority must suffer; and that, in like manner, as it would be impossible to enforce laws among any people whatever, unless they were adapted to their manners and inclinations, so any operation, depending on a feeble minority, would be foreign to the wishes of the nation. From this time the animosity of M. Déprémesnil continued to augment, as well as his desires to bring about a meeting of the states-general. The director-general, on his part, did not neglect that grand object. The opposition which had manifested itself in parliament, and in the administration of the finances, were respectively warm in their emulation to forward the grand revolution of convoking the states-general. That of the provincial states, which Mr. Necker was about to offer to consideration, was only a diminutive means of effecting it.

In the mean time the loan edict was registered, but divers observations were inserted with it. The parliament remarked, "that, after fourteen years of peace, the king, instead of diminishing the imposts, as he had often promised,

was obliged to have recourse to loans, which were the germ of imposts; that the state was going to be burdened with a fresh annual tax; that the king could find no real resources, and perhaps not one resource, but in the execution of his wise intentions, in forming plans of economy; that, in order to effect it, he must enter into the most minute details, and concert with his ministers the means of reform; and, that he alone was capable, by his authority, to stop the torrent of depredation."

The enemies of Mr. Necker supposed and declared, that the director had furnished these representations, to convey his sentiments by means of other organs to the heart of the king, and to prepare him for his opinions. The king, however, seemed pleased with the observations, and promised his parliament to set on foot a reformation.

The loan was filled up by the bankers before it was registered; they seconded with zeal and fervour their fellow-financier, now elevated to the supreme administration of the state; while the superior finance accused them of leaguing with him to deceive the government and the public. For form's sake, however, the gates of the royal treasury were opened, and guards placed about them. At the end of the day the loan was closed from the public, and no one could pro-

cure a share but through the medium of the bankers, who had monopolised the whole. This gave occasion for the financiers to observe, that the minister's operation was a comedy performed by the speculators; that Mr. Necker would be considered in France as the father of stock-jobbing, the destruction of his administration, and the inventor of an artificial credit, and a new tribute in favour of the bankers, at the expence of the creditors of the state. From this day, accusations, debates, and suspicions, never ceased in France, between the financiers, and him they called the *banker-minister*, and his party: so great and subversive of established customs was the elevation of Mr. Necker, from the rank of a banker to that of minister, in a state governed by monarchical establishments and prejudices.

In all the loans that took place during the administration of Mr. Necker, the same facts, the same suspicions, and the same accusations, were brought forward; and the same measures were observed by the bankers. We shall no more repeat the observation.

CHAP. VIII.

Considerations on the Character of the first Operations of Mr. Necker, and on his Administration in the Year 1778.—Institution of Provincial Assemblies in Berry.—Inquiries of the Possessors of Crown Lands, formerly alienated in Favour of Courtiers.—Suppression of the Caisses Royales.—Exile of M. Lauraguais.—First Impressions against the reforming Spirit of Mr. Necker.—The Opposition penetrates into the Government; and the Principles of the Monarchy penetrate into the Opposition, by the Operations of Mr. Necker.

M. De Clugny, during his short administration, was employed in overturning the principles of his predecessor. When M. Turgot was informed, that his edict of average was repealed, tears started from his eyes. Those fine preambles of M. Turgot, which were to render France so prosperous, all disappeared in a few months. M. de Clugny, who entertained opposite opinions, succeeded him. In his reception at the court of aids, it was observed, that the president proposed as models for him "those ancient wise ministers, the friends of property, order, and personal situation, that did good without pomp, and without wishing to surprise the world by their novel ideas, or alarm it by their adventurous speculations. They made

justice and economy their basis; they were faithful in their engagements, and caused commerce and agriculture to flourish. Posterity, the equitable judge of their administration, presented them to the gratitude of future generations, as the benefactors of the human race." This was a direct censure on the innovating system of M. Turgot, and of others like him.

In a few months M. de Clugny died. M. Taboureau succeeded him; and, in order that the philosophy and spirit of the English should not be driven from the administration, Mr. Necker was appointed director of the treasury, to act with M. Taboureau.

No party was surprised at the nomination of the latter. Ever since the reign of Lewis XV., they had talked of making him minister, on account of his probity and fitness for the office. The nomination of Mr. Necker, a banker, on the contrary, stirred up the indignation of the established authorities; and, this minister, without reflecting, that his religion, birth, and country, could not be agreeable to the great, was irritated in secret at this reception.

The first year of Mr. Necker's administration decided the nature of his enemies, and made them known. It threw a light on the innovating spirit of his future administration, and indicated to attentive observers, that the opposition of this new minister would be established

against the first rank of magistrates; and, that the force, or, to make use of the terms of the offended magistrates, the violence of his character, his inflexibility, his haughty and vindictive spirit, and the resentment of the magistracy, would occasion some grievous and unexpected events in the state. Thus, in the same manner as in the time of M. Turgot, an opposition, destructive to the established order of things, had accompanied Mr. Necker into the department of finance, which naturally involved in it the anterior administrations; and the good Lewis XVI., devoted altogether to the minister, prepared himself these inauspicious events, believing he was promoting the happiness of the nation.

The subversion of the established order in the state, the suppression of the intendants of finance, the substitution of provincial administrations, and the abolition of the intendants of commerce, gave the greatest uneasiness to the families that aspired, according to custom, to fill up those offices. Jealous of the elevation of a stranger to the ministry, from the station of a banker, which was regarded in the administration as no more than that of a mere mechanic in the finances, fearful of his ambition, that induced him to displace the magistrates of illustrious rank, whom they honoured, these families accused Mr. Necker of introducing

schemes perfidious and inimical to the French monarchy, which the state ought to suspect, because he commenced his administration by displacing the intendants of finance, established some centuries past to assist, and, if it was necessary, inspect the administration. The dismissal of M. Taboureau, whom Mr. Necker was appointed to assist, merely in the department of credit in the direction of the treasury, confirmed his intentions. It was thought, that Mr. Necker wished to become sole and absolute administrator of his department.

M. Moreau de Beaumont, first of the intendants of finance, was charged with the management of the domains and forests. It was natural for Mr. Necker, who was about to overthrow that administration, not to retain him in office near himself. M. Moreau consented to the subversion of his department, as well as M. de Fourqueux.

M. Trudaine, and M. Bouvard de Fourqueux, counsellors of state, and intendants of finance, had the management of the gabels, the five principal farms, the bridges and highways, the seaports, the canals, and commerce and manufactures. The first possessed, in the branches of knowledge relative to his division, a reputation that will never die. There was not a party in all France but spoke of M. Trudaine with a

kind of veneration. No person in France was more worthy of the administration; no one was able to give Mr. Necker such clear and judicious advice, or so analagous to the genius of Frenchmen. His first duty was to offer them. Mr. Necker, who had to serve an apprenticeship to the administration, if he had done his duty, should have made him the first person of his council. At that time Mr. Necker only possessed a great portion of talent and genius for philosophical objects, which made him strange and dangerous to administration. "He had read and reflected a great deal; he had tried himself in politics," as he says in the sixth page of the volume on his administration, "by contributing to raise the India company, and defending the interests of that establishment against intrigue and tyranny;" he had published a book on the legislation of grain, and acquired a knowledge of his profession of banker; but all these preparatory studies and labours did not even touch upon the system of French administration, which he had to examine thoroughly before he could govern it; at the same time, he only appeared employed in creating and defending what he called *public opinion*, (that is to say, the innovating party that rose up with him) against, as he termed it, *intrigue and tyranny*. He had commenced his career of administration, in this company, by prosecuting *tyranny*

and intrigue His definitive administration exhibits no other character against the enormities that rankle in the government.

The dismissal of M. Trudaine appeared, therefore, an injustice, which established the most inveterate prejudice against Mr. Necker, during the whole of his administration. The director-general wished to preserve his whole department to himself, without the interference of the king. M. Trudaine, full of honour and dignity, retired; and that act that deprived a virtuous man of his office, a man whose name was famous in administration, established against Mr. Necker the first suspicions, and the first complaints; so much the more vexatious, as the astonished and offended magistrates could only manifest them by the publication of pamphlets.

M. Boutin was employed in controuling the acts of notaries and assistants; and, without possessing a renown to be compared with the preceding, he was as full of probity as M. de Fourqueux.

M. d'Ormesson was charged with the taxes and twentieths of the clergy, with general receipts, works of charity, military convoys, management of gunpowder, &c. The nation saw with pleasure, that the most delicate employments were entrusted to that virtuous man. His family had greatly distinguished themselves,

both in judiciary magistracy and in administration. He was never mentioned in society without an eulogium attached to his name.

M. Amelot, in fine, was the sixth intendant of the finances; and, like the former, it was observed with pleasure, that a man of merit, and who bore a distinguished name, by being the son of a minister that had rendered the state some services, was charged with the extraordinary war department, the artillery, &c.

It was, therefore, a revolution in the finances, that abolished their organisation, and deprived the colleagues of Mr. Necker of acting with the king; and that rendered that minister absolute in his office, by having about him only his dependent clerks. Some of these were of obscure merit, or only known by the director-general; the rest (Hamelin) had been discharged from the finances by ministers of probity.

Mr. Necker having got rid of the intendants of finance about the middle of the year 1777, awakened their curiosity, instead of destroying their inspection, and provoked the resentment of all the families who had held these employments. It was remarked in the high administration, that Mr. Necker endeavoured to establish despotism in his department, by making himself independent of his natural colleagues, that had been established for ages; whilst he

substituted for the provincial intendants, men that were strangers to government. It was judged that these two operations were two revolutions in the state. The first effectually allowed Mr. Necker to overturn the department of the finances; and the second, that of the provinces. The former directed the revolution in favour of the plenitude of power with which Mr. Necker had invested himself, in getting rid of his colleagues, and putting a stop to the communications with the prince; and the latter gave back to the French monarchy, as established by cardinal Richelieu, the forms that were known in the time of the Valois.

The suppression of the intendants of commerce excited the same murmurs. The two Montarans, father and son, had been brought up in the doctrines of administration. Genius and probity were hereditary in their family. The Cottes, the Blondels, and the Tolosans, were personages important by the services they had rendered. No consideration could save those valuable men. The friends of the forsaken party could scarcely mix in society to justify them, and make this revolution more interesting in their favour, by saying, " that Mr. Necker asserted with effrontery that the intendants were cheats, ignorant, vain and idle men, and enemies of the minister; that, as to

himself, he cared not for his place, he wanted no profit from it, that he had only accepted it for the welfare of France, and that he only laboured for the glory and restoration of the state; but that, in so doing, he would have no rival, no superior, no check upon his actions; he would only be assisted by dependants.

The suppression of the subaltern employments of the administration, at the same time raised up against him, and placed in a state of anxiety, whoever held any employment belonging to his department. The cancelling of the post-leases spread consternation among all the companies that had contracted with the king. The extension of the twentieths persuaded the parliaments, that Mr. Necker would elude their authority. Monsieur, the king's brother, seeing M. Trudaine and M. d'Ormesson dismissed, began to declare against him; while M. de Sartines, by sacrificing M. de Pezai, and striking a double stroke, annihilated a friend of Mr. Necker's, and a partisan of his administration. Thus, the six first months of the administration of the director-general had already stirred up against him a part of the royal family, a portion of the ministry, the families of the high administration, the secondary administrations, and all the companies that held burdensome leases under the king.

Mr. Necker braved the murmurs, complaints, and resentment of the discontented; firm in his plan to destroy the ancient institutions, he developed it in 1778, with redoubled activity. The republic of letters naturally became the ally and friend of a minister who was directed by its principles; and Mr. Necker established his power and his hopes on the people and on the philosophical party. Madame Geoffrin entertained them on regular days at her house; and, at her death, they shifted to the court of the minister. So that Mr. Necker, instead of seeking the friendship of the most cherished and accredited administrators, deprived them of their offices, avoided their society, and laboured to oppose his system of provincial administrations to the intendants of provinces. Instead of relying for support on the credit of great men in favour, he endeavoured to find out the origin of the possessions of the greatest part of the courtiers, whose ancestors had received their lands from the magnificent bounty of the sovereigns. Thus, instead of seeking the favour of the great, he endeavoured to strip them of their estates.

Respecting the administration of the intendants of the provinces, "scarcely," said Mr. Necker to the king, "can we give the name of administration to this arbitrary will of a single man, sometimes present, and often absent, sometimes capable, and sometimes inca-

pable, who has to direct the most important departments of public order, and who ought to know, having been employed all his life in nothing but requests and cassation, that he cannot be competent; and often, without measuring the extent of the commission with which he is intrusted, only considers his place as a ladder to his ambition. These are the men who are timid before the powerful, and arrogant towards the helpless. These are the men, that, above all, invest themselves with the royal authority; and this authority, in such hands, must often estrange the heart of the people from the king. Your majesty may easily conceive the absurdity, and almost the ridicule, of this pretended administration.

" It is from the fullest conviction of the defect of this contexture of administration, that I have ardently desired, for the honour of your majesty, for the happiness of your people, and for the accomplishment of the duties of my employment, to communicate to your majesty the necessity of thinking seriously and essentially on this important object. To this effect I would propose to you, sire, at first to introduce, in a general way, the trial of a provincial administration. By this measure your majesty will have additional guarantees of the happiness of your people. A wise equilibrium between the three

orders, whether separate or confounded; a sufficient number of representatives to impart the desires of their province; some plain method of keeping the accounts; an agreement to pay the same sum, as usual, into the royal treasury; the simple power of making observations, in case of new demands, so that the king's will may be known thereon, and never thwarted; in fine, the term *gratuitous gift*, absolutely interdicted, and the appellations of countries of administration substituted for countries of state, in order, that the resemblance of names may never lead them to similar pretensions. This is an abridged idea of the conditions essential to a provincial administration.

"The true benefits of a sovereign to his people, consist in laying open the ways of amelioration, independent of the qualities of the man who possesses his confidence; and such would be the effect of well-constituted provincial administrations.

"I have observed sovereigns to possess different kinds of fame. War, politics, the arts, and magnificence, have by turns signalised their reign, and consecrated their memory. There now remains apparently but one new kind of ambition, and which is the most noble of all, attention to the happiness of the people.

A calmer and more enlightened age seems to expose the fallacy of all false grandeurs."

By this extract of Mr. Necker's note, we perceive, that he despised every administration which he had found established; insomuch, that he dared to call the administration of the provinces "an abuse, a ridicule, a pretended administration." Almost two centuries of experience had, however, demonstrated, that many very flourishing provinces, Normandy for example, which was cited as opulent, had not had any other administration than that of the intendants. Such a form of government had sufficed for the most splendid reigns of the monarchy.

We observe also, that Mr. Necker reproached the intendants with considering their plan as ladders of ambition; but he forgot, that those offices were not to be attained in France, but by gradual steps, from the inferior to the superior employments, till they ascended to the ministry.

The suppression of the *caisses royales*, to unite the funds to the royal treasury, stirred up against him the treasurers-general. Count Lauraguais, who inherited from his ancestors some lands alienated from the domains of the crown, endeavoured to turn the circumstance into ridicule;

he wrote a pamphlet against the operations of the minister, which appeared to the opposition full of attic humour and poignancy: he received an order to retire to his estate. From that moment, the intendants of provinces and finance, the king's favourites and placemen, were aware, that it was necessary, for fear of punishment, to suffer their privileges and employments to be taken from them, without murmurs, in order that Mr. Necker might overturn the forms of government. The parliament of Grenoble, however, were very clamorous. The parliament of Rouen had broke out, and made more than vigorous remonstrances on the extension of an impost by virtue of the simple orders of the director of the finances. They had sent their first president, with four others, to give in the resignation of the whole body. The king accepted their resignations, but ordered them to continue their functions until their places were filled up; in the mean time, he sent some troops into the neighbourhood of Rouen. The parliaments were supported in secret by a party of the ministry, who disapproved of the measures of Mr. Necker, particularly those which obliged them to have recourse to him by the suppression of the *caisses royales*.

The chamber of accounts made also some difficulties in registering the edict for the sup-

pression of the treasurers-general. These remonstrances did not, in a small degree, contribute to the violence which Mr. Necker manifested that year against the parliament, in the notes relating to the provincial administration. The opposition published them afterwards, in 1781, in order to re-inforce itself against the parliaments which Mr. Necker had had the prudence to temporise with.

Mr. Necker, on this occasion, provoked the hatred of the people of the court, by his researches into the concessions of the ancient domains of the king, on conditions burdensome to the state; he had resolved neither to grant nor exchange any more, to permit no reversion, and suffer no succession in the affairs of finance, or in its principal employments; and, above all, to put off, till the end of the year, the payment of pensions.

To be acquainted, on the other side, with what were his doctrines respecting the poor, we must hear Mr. Necker himself. "It is not only," says he, "as one of the most pious duties of humanity, that I would recommend to the minister of finance, the protection of the people, and the guardianship of the poor; it is also, because such a solicitude is the mean of contributing effectually to the prosperity and power of a state. Infants cannot thrive, and be brought

up, without the assistance of their parents; population is constantly repressed by the misery of the people. The sovereign must cherish, and pay every regard to that description of his subjects. 'A faithful guide in the administration of finance is, a sentiment of profound love and consideration for the people.'

"If, during six years of war, or preparations for it, and after having taken the finances in a state of disorder, I have re-established the balance between the revenues and the ordinary expenditure, and if my administration can provide for extraordinary expences without obliging your majesty to have recourse to taxes, I shall have seconded the love of the king for his subjects. It is a truth that has been in vain contradicted. The resources of my administration have provided, without extraordinary imposts, for the expences of the years 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781, and even for those of a part of 1782; while, in England, the taxes from 1778 to 1781, taxes which will never be taken off, amounted to 54 millions; but they have borrowed nothing on annuities."

The man, perhaps, who has contributed by his understanding, to prevent, during six years of such great expenditure, the formation of fresh taxes; who has been able to appropriate to useful labours the funds which they were allowed, in

times of the greatest tranquillity; who has satisfied the heart of the king, by pointing out to him the means of distributing, throughout his provinces, the same resources as in times of peace, and even more; who, at the same time, presented to the laudable impatience of the monarch the necessary resources for setting on foot, in the midst of war, the restoration of prisons and hospitals; who has gratified his generous inclinations by inspiring him with the desire of extinguishing the remains of servitude; who, in rendering homage to the character of the monarch, has seconded his disposition for order and economy; who has solicited the establishment of paternal administrations, in which the most private inhabitants of the empire may take a part; and, in fine, by a multitude of cares, has, in some measure, caused the name of the prince to be blessed, even in the cottages of the poor,—perhaps such a servant has some pretensions, after his retreat, to represent, without a blush, the love and care of the people as one of the first rules of administration.

CHAP. IX.

Continuation of the History of the Opposition set up against the first Operations of Mr. Necker—The Clergy divided into three Parties on his Account—Considerations on his Administration, on the Paper-Money which he created, and on the Character of the Bank, relative to the Royal Authority—He is compared to Law.—Suppression of the Treasurers, and the Incumbrances of the King's Household.

DURING the innovations and suppressions of Mr. Necker, the most passionate discussion and abuse was poured forth against him. This abuse was the more mortifying, as Mr. Necker's party was forsaken by the ministry, and the great men of the state.

The mass of the clergy of France were averse to Mr. Necker. In that powerful body, however, although weakened by the continual assaults that were directed against it, he found two favourable minorities; that of the philosophical bishops, as the Dillons, the Loménies, the Boisgelins, the Colberts, and the Cicés. These personages did not embrace his party as members of the clergy, but because the support of ministers was for them the means of elevation. The opposite part of the clergy were also attached to Mr. Necker. Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, whose religion had been so often metamorphosed into

fanaticism against the jansenists, was intimately connected with this protestant minister. It was the only plank remaining to bear him still up at court, where he was eclipsed by the political bishops, and from which he was repulsed by the party of the queen, by that of the Choiseuls, and by the philosophers. The violence of this prelate had definitively insulated him from all the world. Thus Mr. Necker had in his interests the two ends of the clergy; the political bishops, which the devotee clergy termed *bishop-administrators of provinces;* and Beaumont, chief of the devotee bishops, whom the political bishops, in their tone of pleasantry, called *bishop-administrators of sacraments.* One of the clergy of the middle party published the following verses:

Nous l'avons vu, scandale épouvantable!
Necker assis avec Christophe à table,
Et dix prélats savourant à l'envi,
Et grande chère et nectar délectable;
L'église en pleure, et Satan est ravi.
Mais en ce jour, d'une indulgence telle,
Quel serait donc le motif important?
C'est que Necker, le fait est très-constant,
N'est janseniste—il n'est que protestant.

What see we now? O monstrous sinners!
Necker and Christopher join dinners.
While ten gross prelates, round them, share,
With bursting paunch, the sumptuous fare.
Hell laughs; the church surveys aghast.—
Ask you the cause of this repast?—
Necker's no jansenist, 'tis known—
A mere, mere protestant alone.

As for the middle party, which was composed of the mass of the Gallican church, they only found in the director of the finances, a Genevese, an innate enemy of the church and state.

The operations of the director-general against the high finance and against the receivers excited against him the most violent uproar. Pamphlets increased, and discredit began. The complaints, on account of the suppressions mentioned in the preceding chapter, made the liveliest impressions at court. Notes were distributed among the principal nobility, who possessed very considerable influence. Birth and rank still enjoyed their authority and credit. They continued to depreciate the merit of Mr. Necker. Verses and pamphlets were every day showered against him. It was however observed, that the opposition was on the part of the great, and the high finance, who were full of wrath and invective, and which tended to give the director of the finances the most profound inveteracy against the high nobility in credit and in place. A fresh memorial published against him augmented the uneasiness of his party.

"I possess none but French sentiments," said the author; "I wish to employ them in attacking the principles and the operations of the chief of our finances. In 1775, Mr. Necker, a fo-

reigner of no distinction, thought to be able to enlighten the nation and the administration of M. Turgot, on the system of the absolute liberty of the commerce of grain. Writing then against the principles of government, he might have had reason to complain of a minister, who was the greatest enthusiast for liberty, if he had caused him to endure the rigours of prohibition. Every citizen applauded, and the government reaped, the fruits of its toleration.

"The political constitution of France is entirely opposite to that of a republic. Its spirit, its forms, its magistracy, and its legislation of imposts, are different. Resources, effectual at Geneva, would be too dangerous for us. What might save its territory, would ruin the monarchy. Mr. Necker, previous to his administration, was only employed in speculative objects of commerce. Arrived among us, in absolute ignorance of our manners, our customs, our prejudices, our laws, and our forms, he found no other employment for his genius than in the bank. He there imbibed the spirit of calculation, and the very legitimate desire of making a fortune. The gain of 1,800,000 livres at the peace was the first result of it, in which no fault can be found, except in the refusal to give the clerks of foreign affairs the allowance they had agreed for, if this refusal was true:—but

although St. Foix, Favier, and the president of Lavergne, attest it, there is still not sufficient proof for an imputation of this nature.

" The administration of the abbé Terray was the epoch when Mr. Necker's talents were developed. He negotiated the loans and the scheme of paying the creditors of the state with debts owing to it. He made great profits therein; by which, in six years, he insured a capital of six millions,—we ought not to conclude otherwise than by dint of good fortune. We cannot blame this good fortune; but surely it is impossible not to allow, that Mr. Necker has less right than another to censure the opulence of people of finance. It is almost impossible to imagine, that a desire to increase this fortune could have induced him to seek the administration of our finances. If he has sacrificed every thing to M. de Pezai, to arrive at it; if he has thought it his duty to give two millions by way of caution to the king, in order to obtain it; the hope of gratifying his active genius, and of immortalising himself, might have been his motive; for it is difficult to attribute to him a love of the country;—he was not born a Frenchman. On another side, he has refused to accept of any salary; which is so extraordinary a disinterestedness on the part of an individual of another country towards the king of France,

that jealousy may accuse him of pride, or suspect that he may make amends for it by amalgamating the affairs of the finances of France with his brother's bank. Besides, we do not perceive that his occupations, anterior to his administration, had prepared him for the duties of his employment. He had published, it is true, *The Eulogium of Colbert*, a work of merit, and his book *On the Commerce of Grain*, that has some good points in it; but they are pervaded with a spirit of system and principles dangerous and inimical to our opinions of property and proprietaries.

" Mr. Necker was scarcely established in his office of director-general, when he thought of dispensing with the intendants of the finances. This event announced a new plan of administration. It seemed to imply, that he considered our government as a series of errors. These intendants had existed for two hundred years. The house of Bourbon had created them, and reserved them as permanent councils and co-operators with the ministers of the finances. This employment was the recompence of the high robe, and of the most distinguished members of the council of state. What was Mr. Necker's intention in annihilating this council? The enemies of his fame pretended, that, being director of the royal treasury under

M. Taboureau in 1777, full of hope that he should succeed to his employment, and taken up with the means of conducting an administration of which he had then no knowledge, he saw with terror the vicinity and rivalship of the intendants. He judged it necessary to employ only dependent clerks, who persuaded him, that the expulsion of their masters was the only method of establishing his independence, his system, and his innovations, without any disquieting contradiction. These clerks, who think themselves the architects of the state, because they are the workmen, offered themselves to fill up the deficiency, and represented the ancient council of intendants as observers, that would place themselves by the side of Mr. Necker, in a state of perpetual contradiction. Such was the destiny of the intendants of finance, of the Ormessons, the Trudaines, the Fourqueux, the Chauvelins, and the Amelots. Could not their probity, their fortune, their birth, and their connexions with the supreme magistracy, be the guarantees of the purity of their principles and of their virtue? Is it an economy worthy of the throne, to displace the elect of the magistracy, and of the administration, and to substitute clerks in their stead? Is that economy commendable in a monarchical state, by which rank is rendered so despicable, that the

most distinguished persons of the state, by their employments or by their birth, accustomed till now to treat of affairs with the magistrates, must be obliged to wait in the anti-chambers of clerks, to attend their public audiences, or to write to be admitted to speak to them? The destruction of the intendants might be a plan of economy at Geneva, but never in a kingdom like ours. A minister of the finances sees economy where there is individual security, where there is wisdom in devising and honesty in executing.

"The suppression of the treasurers of the different administrations incurs the most grievous inconvenience: the dependence of the army, the marine, and foreign affairs, on the operations of the minister of the finances. Whether this inconvenience be sufficiently balanced by the wisdom and character of Mr. Necker, a banker and a foreigner, the event will prove. Law, a foreign banker, suppressed also the treasurers of the army, the navy, the king's household, &c. and the state could only stand two years. Every one at the head of a department is minister of it; and confusion takes place of order, if the minister of finance makes them subject to his administration.

"As to the reform in the king's household,

it must be acknowledged, that in many respects it was necessary; but destruction is not reform. The majesty of the throne requires some luxury of expence in the regal establishment. The style of the court of Versailles, and the parsimony of the republic of Geneva, are incompatible. The palace of a great monarch cannot be reduced to the silence of a mournful solitude; the environs of his abode cannot at once be changed into deserts. What a terrific prospect is Mr. Necker preparing for the royal family! The parliament of England, actuated by the seducing example of our plans of reform, are at this moment discussing the advantages and inconveniences of them; and that nation disposes every year of a great sum, to support the splendor and majesty of the throne.

"As to the *caisse d'escompte*, we will agree that it is impossible to unite the credit of it to the military power of the state. An absolute monarch ought to renounce the confidence of his subjects; he must know how to defray the expences attendant on benefices. A bank, or, what is the same thing, the place where the fortune of the head of the state is deposited, either in a republic or a dependent and limited monarchy, might be of great use; but, for a hundred and fifty years past, every thing has been done in France to prevent the state from falling into the

rank of dependent monarchies *. A bank might there too be established, if it was by French proprietaries, without the intervention of government, and without supporting its influence. If Messrs. Germani, Girardot, Haller, Rilliet, Deodati, and other Genevans, were Parisians and proprietaries, the establishment might be natural and durable; but the administrators of the *caisse d'escompte* are almost all foreigners. And who will answer to the public, that, after having extracted a sum proportionate to their desires, they will not go and enjoy their fortune in a country of their choice, leaving us only their tissue paper to dry our tears. If, besides, this bank has the fault of being instituted by order of council; if the royal treasury take an interest in the circulation of its notes; if the mould be in the independent hands of the military power; if government be no more obliged to sanction this paper than it has sanctioned the most legitimate rights of the creditors of the state; if the mass of notes may be increased tenfold without inconvenience; is not this establishment in France a proceeding too monstrous to be endured, dependent too as it is on the momentary credit of the minister, its founder and pro-

* Mr. Necker, from the time of his elevation to the administration, did every thing in his power to prevent the form of this kind of government from being preserved.

tector? Is not the catastrophe of 1720 still present in the mind of every Frenchman? Now Mr. Necker has tried all methods for the success of these notes; he has written to the companies of finance to engage them to sanction them; he has made use of them himself in the payments of the royal treasury; he has agreed with the principal bankers, to make their payments with that paper only.

" An administrator should at least avoid, in his writings and plans, as well as in their execution, such inconsequences and contradictions that announce an incoherence of ideas. On one side he every where declares the want of money; and on the other, he enumerates the suppression of employments, the expence of which created an enormous debt.

" He promised reimbursements in the king's name, and he has repaid nothing.

" He writes, and causes to be written, that the abundance of the specie of the kingdom requires a prompt exportation of our millions, sadly heaped together; and he creates a paper money *that multiplies them.*

" He endeavours to establish public confidence for his loans; and by his loans he augments the debt so considerably, that the state must sink under it.

" He publishes incessantly his plan of govern-

ment without new imposts; and he incessantly augments them indirectly.

"Mr. Necker looks upon those people as his enemies, who observe to him, that he is utterly ruining the monarchy. Some day they will be heard; but it will be then too late."

CHAP. X.

Administration of Mr. Necker in 1779.—Continuation of the History of his Destructions.—Examination of the great Burdens of the State.—The Treasurers of the Household of the King and Queen are suppressed.—M. de Sartines' Plans for a Descent on England, and the Projects of Mr. Necker for a Peace.—Continuation of the Establishments of the Provincial Assemblies.—Provincial Assembly of Montauban.

MR. NECKER, finding himself publicly attacked by the political bodies, and by the council of state, had desired to be made a member of the council, in order to have the privilege of entering therein, to discuss his projects. M. de Maurepas, who observed in Mr. Necker a second Turgot, opposed him. The first misunderstandings between the minister and the director are dated from this circumstance. The year 1779 was still more tempestuous, as the partisans of the minister and courtiers increased, and as the resistance on the part of Mr. Necker was more spirited. Money was wanted, war was declared, and Mr. Necker, striking at the great, who were the reputed cause of the dilapidations, had raised the credit to such a point,

that his fellow-bankers supplied him with all he required.

The rivalship between Mr. Necker and M. de Sartines, minister of the marine, this year broke out openly. The former suspected the latter of dilapidation; and the latter declared, that Mr. Necker had endeavoured to render abortive his preparations for war, and that he was bought by the English. Mr. Necker persisted in being made acquainted with the manner in which the money he had advanced to M. de Sartines had been disposed of, which amounted to some millions. M. de Sartines replied, "that it was in the secret service of the state." The king decided between the parties, in such a manner, however, as left them still at variance on the subject. Mr. Necker was not initiated into the secrets relative to the appropriation of this money.

It was conjectured, that he was strongly attached to England. The friendship of the English government for Geneva, the two countries being of the same religion, and the particular partiality for the British which Mr. Necker had discovered, persuaded many, that M. de Sartines' declarations were not without foundation; above all, as, since Mr. Necker was acquainted with a plan of making a descent on the coasts of Britain, which always struck a panic into the English,

he had carried his zeal so far as to propose a project of pacification to the king, which M. de Maurepas and M. de Vergennes had caused to fail.

In the midst of these debates, pursuing the execution of his plans, he suppressed the treasurers of the household of the king and queen, the three offices of comptrollers-general, those of treasurers of provisions, those of steward, chamberlain, and equery, and that of the queen's household. The prince of Condé was deprived of his employment of grand-master of the king's household. On another side, Mr. Necker established the provincial administration of Montauban, and furnished the funds which had been raised by the loan. The intendants of the provinces, the financiers, and others, complained to M. de Maurepas, that he seemed to approve of Mr. Necker's throwing desolation into every family of distinction, and that he permitted the citizen of Geneva to change the order of government, and to destroy it piecemeal, as he would demolish an edifice. M. de Maurepas answered, in pleasantry, that Mr. Necker was a maker of gold, and that he had established in the government the philosopher's stone.

"That is to say," replied Senac de Meilhan, "that a loan is a recompence for destruction."

"Precisely so," returned M. de Maurepas! "He gives us millions, provided we grant him the suppression of a few employments."

"And if he asked you to cut off the heads of the intendants....." "Perhaps," replied M. de Maurepas, "we should permit it. Find the philosopher's stone for us, and I promise you that his majesty will make you minister the same day."

Which is exactly saying, that M. de Maurepas, to obtain money, allowed Mr. Necker to destroy the monarchy.

M. de Maurepas, however, secretly convinced that he had found in Mr. Necker a second Turgot, sought, in the bottom, only some plausible opportunity to dismiss him; of which the director-general was apprised.

"It is impossible to express," says he, of himself, "the fortitude which it was necessary for me to possess: I still remember that long and dark stair-case of M. de Maurepas, which I ascended with fear and melancholy, uncertain of the reception which my ideas, that most frequently tended to the increase of the revenue, would meet with [redacted] him. I still remember that cabinet *en entresol*, under the roof of the palace of Versailles indeed, but over the great apartments, and which, by its diminutiveness and its situation, seemed a true extract and a superfine sketch of every vanity and of every

kind of ambition. It was in such a place as this, that a minister, grown old in the ostentation and customs of a court, was to be advised with on reform and economy. I remember all the skill I was obliged to exert, in order to succeed; and several times I was repulsed. At length I obtained some concessions for the public weal. I obtained them, I could easily perceive, *as a kind of recompence*, for the resources I had found in the midst of the war.

"In the presence of the king I was more encouraged: young and virtuous, he could, and he would hear every thing. The queen also listened to me favourably; but to how much hatred and enmity have I been exposed in the regal presence, at court and in town. My constancy was ever put to the test, to counteract the effects of credit and power. I had to combat every faction of interest in this continual strife; and every moment was my fragile existence at stake."

CHAP. XI.

Continuation of the Oppositions stirred up against the Measures of Mr. Necker.—The Treasurers of the King's Brothers, united, deliver to Monsieur, and the Count d'Artois, a virulent Paper against his Administration; they pretend that Messrs. Malesherbes and Turgot are the Authors of it.—History of Mr. Necker's Administration, from his coming to the Direction of the Finances, to the Month of April 1780, *according to the Account of the Chiefs of the Finances, of Monsieur and the Count d'Artois.*

AMONGST the infinite number of writings that attacked the operations of Mr. Necker, history distinguishes those which the contemporary financiers opposed to his principles. The king's brothers, not being able to draw at pleasure from the royal treasury, and finding themselves restricted by Mr. Necker's inattention to trivial applications, thundered against him. A memorial was remitted, in the month of August 1780, to Monsieur, the king's brother, and to the count d'Artois, by their chiefs of finance, who were of course enemies of Mr. Necker. To render it the more interesting, they circulated copies of it at court, and attri-

buted the work to M. de Malesherbes, and particularly to M. Turgot.

" I have watched all your operations, since your appointment to the finances, said M. Turgot to M. Necker, and I every day see, that I committed a great fault upon entering into administration. I ought to have chosen you for my first clerk, and such a place at that time would have suited you. I left the management of the accounts and register to M. de Vaisnes; and you know better the manner of keeping the books and balancing the accounts. I considered this labour as beneath myself; it was my principal fault; and was derived from the prejudices of birth and education.

" Different in every respect from my predecessors and myself, you possessed more advantages than we did. You have employed with success the knowledge that Sully, Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert, had the imprudence to throw into the subaltern classes. You detest the financiers, and you have a strange aversion for the magistracy. Born a republican, you do not love the forms of the monarchy. You are connected with every banker, and you are a banker yourself; your fortune is in a bank, and there is not one of your operations that, in the end, is not for the profit of the bank; while the great

ministers of past times were only administrators. You are only acquainted with the calculations of imposts; and they saw nothing more important in them than their basis and their legislation. You have introduced into our finances, the science of transferring debts, and raising loans, to which every banker in distress must have recourse; and you have appeared a surprising man, because you had never opened an account at the bank.

"Circumstances have been particularly favourable to you. Clugny, your predecessor, had prepared your reforms. You had opened the port-folios of M. Malesherbes and myself; you had taken your ideas of suppressing the treasures from them, as well as the reform of the king's household. We have had to execute the labour, and you reap the honour of it; but you have risked its success by the manner in which you have presented it to the public. M. de Malesherbes and myself would have thought, that we did not sufficiently respect the great officers of the king's household, if we had had the idea of reform without their co-operation; and you, sir, you refuse them, in the eyes of the king and the nation, the merit of an honourable sacrifice; and you endeavour to disgrace them, by working with mystery, and in secret. You inspire in the king an unjust distrust towards them; you manifest an intention of depriving them of

what is their due; and add insinuations, to give an idea, that if they were not accomplices in the malversions which distressed the state, they at least tolerated them.

" In a monarchy, ministers ought to be the first to know how to appreciate the distinction of rank, and the respect due to personages who are employed near the monarch; and you are a great stranger therein. M. de Malesherbes and myself would have conceived, that we had failed in our duty, if we had excluded the great officers of the crown from concerting directly with the king the project of reform. The great officers of the king's household were in the habit of transacting affairs with Lewis XVI.: we should have thought we were guilty of an unbecoming usurpation, if we had enriched our administration by the spoils of others. Your conduct towards them has, therefore, procured you a refusal to act with them; because of your personal incapacity, and your ignorance of the forms of the government of the state, which have induced his majesty not to suffer you to be admitted into the ministry, or the employments of the state, as you can neither be acknowledged, nor registered nor sworn, to any part of it. After such proceedings, you have reason to expect all the impediments and all the humiliations that are attached to similar offences.

"As to the suppression of the treasurers, how could you think of comprehending the queen's, in despite of the formal clauses of the marriage contract of that princess, on the faith of which she has consented to become our sovereign: tremble lest some one should open her eyes to the consequences of this violation of the most sacred of engagements! Already has the council of the queen, composed of M. de Paulmi, her chancellor, M. Berthier, her superintendant, M. Augeard, her private secretary, and others, protested, at the arsenal, against the edict of your reforms.

"Your rivals in banking pretend, that you have only made these suppressions to favour the coffers of your company. M. de Malesherbes and myself had only the interest of the state in view. They have wished to persuade me, that you have some private ends, and that your ability, in the transfer of debts, and in banking, has formed some intimate connexions between your house and the *caisse d'escompte*, the black notes, the commerce of loan notes, and the funds of the royal treasury. The notaries, the bankers, and the agents, that have no concern whatever in your affairs, declaim, night and day, against you. They calculate the progression of your fortune from the establishment of your bank. Since your elevation to the administra-

tion in 1777, there have been upwards of forty additional clerks employed in it. Without advancing a farthing, your bank has gained, in the last six months, one million seven hundred thousand livres on the monopoly of the last loan. I can now perceive the reasons that have induced the chief of the finances of France, a banker, and a Genevese, to suppress the coffers of finance, and to discredit the finances.

" I shall dwell but a moment on the alarming circulation of the mass of paper money, called *black notes*. The banks, individuals, and the households of the princes, are obliged to receive them as current coin. There are, perhaps, to the amount of one hundred millions in circulation. This is just following the steps of Law: the foundation of the credit of France is, at this day, on a sheet of paper, on your word, and on opinion. It is not surprising, that the house of commons at London should have pronounced your eulogium *.

" You detest, sir, the farmers-general; for myself, I only hated the general-farm. For a long time since, there has existed a rivalship

* It is not true, that Mr. Necker's fortune was augmented either during his first or second administration; it has diminished by the deposit that he made in the national treasury, which is not yet refunded.

between the financiers and the bankers. The financiers have had the superiority till the present time; under your reign, the bankers have obtained it. All our predecessors, from the time of Sully, have preferred the companies of financiers to the companies of bankers, from a conviction, that bankers have two countries; that, where they find money cheap; and the other, where they sell it very dear to their own advantage. The financiers were dependent on the government; and the bankers, on the contrary, hold it in eternal dependance. The bankers begin by lending to the government, for the term of six months, with commission, which makes it double. Government falls into difficulties; then they advance, for four months, with triple commission. The embarrassment increases; they advance no more, but at three months, with a quadruple commission. If the government becomes tired of usury, it must pay, without the possibility of retreating, otherwise it would be accused of having become a bankrupt with the banks of Geneva, London in particular, and with Holland, that in future would never be concerned with a perfidious and dishonourable government. Now, what have been your views in establishing your credit with the bankers, humiliating the French financiers, and ruining

their credit? You, who desire to be firm and independent in your office, without the smallest contradiction, must be obeyed and satisfied, otherwise you do not hesitate to take your accounts in your hand, and propose to the king to permit you to resign. You imagine, that his majesty cannot grant it, because you suppose he is absolutely dependent on you. You have, as I imagine, made the state debtor to your house, and to your bankers, one hundred and thirty millions for six months. If the king should dismiss you, where is he to find that sum, after you have destroyed the credit of the ancient financiers?

"In the ancient form of administration, when the government borrowed from the financiers dependent on the administration, they were anxious to preserve their places and employments. The contractors wished to ensure their undertakings, the farmers their leases, and the titularies their offices; all was a security for the fidelity and extent of these resources. Your bankers, on the contrary, have no tie to attach them; they are no longer in possession of your effects; they have been very careful to put them in circulation. M. de Lauraguais, a twelvemonth ago, said, in his publication, that no minister ever possessed such preponderating credit as you, precisely,

because you are not minister, and that you cannot belong to the council. He was perfectly right. By the play of your bank, you are the most dangerous cosmopolite; by the ascendancy of your severe and imperious manners, you get rid of all opposers; you take advantage of the complaisance of M. de Maurepas, as well as of his goodness; he laughs at all that you do, because he gives play to the irregular torrent of your imagination; you take advantage of the frank and pliable disposition of a young prince, whose desire it is to act justly, and who is anxious to adopt any plan for the good of the state; he has no longer a council of finance to consult with; every thing is at the mercy of your clerks, and your caprice. All things are overturned by you; and you establish confusion to render yourself necessary to the re-establishment of order. You persuade the king, that truth cannot reach him, but through yourself. It is the calculation of intrigue, self-interest, and ambition. You aim, like Erostratus, at glory and immortality.

"With the title of liberator of your brethren, the protestants would flatter your vanity; it would be decreed to you for ever, if you could contrive to give them a civil establishment, to procure them the privileges of citizens, liberty, and toleration. You are sure of the diminution of the power of

the clergy. Your vigorous edict, relating to the hospitals, is preparing the ruin of their credit and riches; you have opened the trenches against them; the grand blow is struck. All the rest will not fail to come down; you will transfer all the credit of the state, and all the wealth of France, into the hands of protestant, Genevese, English, and Dutch bankers. The clergy will be consigned to contempt, and dependent on the consideration of your brethren. These views are the effect of a great genius, and you add thereto considerable address.

" All your predecessors, notwithstanding, had uniformly rejected your system; the plan of abolishing the finances was proposed eighteen years ago. Government perceived, that it tended to annihilate the necessary credit of the state; and you ought not to have forgotten the advantages you derived from it in the course of last year. Experience will prove, what the *registering farmers*, which you have established, will do for us; you will then receive the benedictions of the people on the mild equity of your administration; this is what you are in expectation of; and it may be at no great distance. Your religion and birth, in the mean time, are obstacles to your admission into the employments of the state, and of the ministry. Your wife, formerly mistress of a village

school, can she pretend to the honours of the Louvre *?

" In vaunting of disinterestedness, and a refusal of the *loaves and fishes*, you give an opportunity for people, who are not acquainted with you, to ask if Mr. Necker is opulent enough to make such sacrifices. Those who are acquainted with you, and have watched the progress of your fortune, malignantly answer, that, on your coming from Geneva, you began, by employing yourself as clerk to a banker; that finding the profession of a banker to be very profitable, you set up a bank yourself; that, to accomplish it, you ventured to speculate in the stocks, on the prospect of a peace; and, in order to be able to play a sure game, you made a proposal to two of the principal clerks at Versailles, that, if they would make you acquainted with the time of the conclusion of the treaty, they should have a third of your profits; that you gained one million eight hundred thousand livres. They add, that whilst you were under M. Terray, you transacted some little stock-jobbing business with the king, termed honest usury, taking the profits thereof, and selling them to advantage to the royal treasury. By

* Notwithstanding, the daughters of merchants and financiers, who were married to dukes and peers, were never debarred that honour.

these means you gained, in six or seven years, an annual income of a hundred thousand crowns. These facts place your satire on the opulence of *financiers*, and on rapid fortunes, in a very ridiculous point of view, as the fortune of *bankers* advances in nearly as surprising a manner. Do not imagine, that people are duped by the petty trick of your destroying the bank of your brother Germani, and the same year erasing the names of Girardot and Haller, your friends and partners, from the list of bankers in the royal almanack. Your disinterestedness on the *loaves and fishes*, and the bribes that you have refused, is only a parade, and an insulting deception: we might well be generous, if we were possessed of a banking-house that perplexed all the affairs of Europe.

"You affect, sir, too public a contempt for the farmers-general, and their families. It would have been unpardonable in me to have spoken of your birth, if you had not aspersed the families of our financiers. Your conversations, as well as those of your wife, have reached their ears. They are, no doubt, still supported, although deprived of their offices, by the voices of the great men of the state.

"The destruction which you have occasioned in the office of the *receivers* had created a greater sensation than the reduction of the

farmers. The company of receipts was of advantage to the credit of the state, since you have drawn upon it, in rescriptions, to the amount of more than an hundred and thirty millions. What interest will the king derive from this destruction? They must be reimbursed. It is true, that you put off this operation till after the examination of their accounts; which is a very dishonest pretext: the truth is, you have not the means to do it; and, after the destruction of every thing, you will become a bankrupt."

CHAP. XII.

Attempts of the Enemies of Mr. Necker to procure his Dismissal from the Ministry—Their Manœuvres to ruin the Credit of the Caisse-d'Escompte—They give a Detail of their Villany.—Publication of the famous Parallel between Mr. Necker and Law.—Account of its Result.

THE violence against Mr. Necker was carried to such a pitch, that his enemies did not hesitate to attack even the operations of the *caisse d'escompte*, and endeavour to ruin its credit. They were informed, that he borrowed great sums of that bank; and they published the following pamphlet. It is essential to expose it to view, in order to give an idea of the malevolence of the factions. They sacrificed to their resentment an institution of the utmost value to the commercial world. This is an exact copy of the gloomy publication.

COMPARISON

BETWEEN

MESSRS. NECKER AND LAW.

Summary of the Proceedings of the Administration of the Finances in the Years 1716, 17, 18, 19, *and* 1720, *on the one Part; and of those of* 1776, 77, 78, 79, *and* 1780, *on the other Part; copied from the original Work, published in Continuation of the* HISTORY *of the* SYSTEM.

IN the *History of the System* we read, that, before it was published, every resource was exhausted that could procure loans, lotteries, or the creation of annuities.

That Law then proposed his system as the mean of preventing the surcharge of the state with new taxes.

That he caused to be taken into consideration the destruction of all private credit, in order

IN the history of the present time we shall read, that Mr. Necker has drained all the resources of loans, lotteries, and creation of annuities: edicts of 1776, 1777, 1778, and 1779.

That he presented his plan of economy as the mean of preventing the state from being surcharged with new taxes.

That he has caused to be taken into consideration the destruction of intermediate credit, in

to produce the augmentation of that of the king, which he proposed to substitute for all the others.

A declaration of the king, ordaining, that all the notes created for the service of the state should be called in and verified, which caused, in the beginning of the year 1716, the retardation of their payment.

Decree of the council of state of the 2d of May 1716, which permitted Law and Company to establish a public bank, under the title of the *Banque generale.*

A twelvemonth afterwards, the general bank was united to the royal treasury, and it was ordained, that its notes

order to procure the augmentation of that of the king, which he has proposed to substitute for all others.

The declaration of the 7th of February, 1779, importing, that brevets of pensions or other gifts should be called in, to verify them, has given his majesty the profit arising from the delay of their payment.

Decree of the council of state of the 22d of September 1776, which suffered a company to establish a public bank, under the title of the *Caisse d'Escompte : item,* decree of the 7th of March 1779.

The notes of the *caisse d'escompte* are received in all the king's banks, and offered in payment to individuals, although

should be received in payment.

Decree of the council of state of the 10th of January 1717, which ordains, that the farmers-general - extraordinary shall be obliged to produce and swear to their accounts before the commissaries.

Decree of the council of state of the 27th of August 1718, which dissolves and annuls the leases of the general farm.

Decree of the council of state of the 12th of October 1719, to suspend the functions of the receivers-general of finance; and ordaining, that they should be reimbursed by orders payable to the bearer as soon as the liquidation of the finances could be accomplished.

contrary to their establishment.

Edict of the king of the month of November 1778, which ordains, that the treasurers-general and individual shall be suppressed, and obliged to produce and swear to their accounts before the commissaries.

Decree of the council of the 9th of January 1780, which destroys the general farm.

Edict of the king of the month of April 1780, to suspend the functions of the receivers-general of finance; and ordaining their reimbursements, when a revision and correction of their accounts shall have been made, which would cause a delay of four months.

The rescriptions were converted into bank-notes.

We may suppose that these rescriptions were discredited; they wished make up the deficiency by the notes of the *caisse d'escompte*.

Declaration of the king of the month of February 1720, with elegant preambles, tending to the suppression of luxury.

The preambles of the new edicts are still more eloquent, having the same object in view.

The author of the system was looked upon, for the space of two years, as a superior genius; he became the dauntless guarantee of every event; his opinion prevailed in the council; and his operations excited the enthusiasm of the public.

The author of the new plan is still regarded as a superior genius; he does not hesitate to guarantee the success of what he proposes, without belonging to the council; he knows how to make his opinions prevail; and his operations have met, even to this moment, with some enthusiasts.

Mr. Law was a foreigner and a banker.

He was comptroller-general.

Mr. Necker is a foreigner and a banker.

He is director-general.

He overturned the kingdom, ruined individuals, became bankrupt, and escaped.

M. de Maurepas was in the council, but was too young to foresee a fatal catastrophe.

The parliament, alarmed at the establishment of the bank, decreed, on the 12th of August 1718, that no foreigner, even if naturalised, should be able to hold any situation in the administration of the royal treasury, under penalties mentioned in the ordinances. This decree did not prevent the catastrophe; but it proved, that the parliament had foreseen it, and justified their endeavours.

He overturns every thing, ruins individuals, &c. &c. &c.

M. de Maurepas is at the head of the council; it is only by his wisdom that the state may hope to be preserved from a similar catastrophe.

Mr. Necker treads in the same steps as Law. And what can be the excuse of the parliament and the ministry, if the same effect results from it? A decree of the council has sanctioned the establishment of a *caisse d'escompte* for letters of exchange; but can a paper-money exist without the sanction of parliament?

It is impossible to give any idea of the effect which this comparison produced on the public mind. The possessors of bank-notes were seized with such a panic, that the streets and squares of the capital were blocked up with the influx of *realizers*. Let us hear even what the enemies of Mr. Necker said on the subject; they describe the effect of their manœuvres in the following terms. "Mr. Necker being in want of money, caused a creation of new notes, to the amount of the sum he had occasion for, and substituted notes, signed d'Harvelay, at the bank. As soon as the comparison between Mr. Necker and Law appeared, all Paris ran to the bank; and Mr. Necker had no other resource, to do away the terror of the Parisians, than bringing the royal coffers by night into the bank, and providing for his notes in the banks of the departments. It would not be prudent to reveal more of this plan; but these facts, compared with the doctrine of Rillet, a Genevese, contained in the letters published *On Loans and Taxes*, make it evidently appear, that his design was to draw all the money out of the kingdom, and replace it . . . . . *with paper*. This Genevese has endeavoured to persuade us, as a principle of government, 'that France ought to promote the exportation of money, in any manner whatever; that our attention ought to be turned

to the convenience there would be in substituting another currency for the fugitive millions, by hastening, in a year or two, the establishment of a national bank; that, thus, all the remains of ancient barbarism would successively disappear; that we may judge, by the developement of the mind, what were those of the folly of ancient times, which are the first to take flight; and that, as working night and day to amass money is a proof of great ignorance in the French nation, so this folly must have an end: it is necessary to be industrious in exporting with effect from the kingdom a part of our hundreds of millions, so miserably heaped together.'

"To what danger is a great nation exposed by the principles and systems of Genevese bankers!"

CHAP. XIII.

Considerations on the System of Loans, and on the Principles of the French Government on that Part of the Revenue.—Connexions of the System of Loans introduced by Mr. Necker, with the Mechanism of the ancient Government.—Borrowing to prevent imposing must oppress future Generations with the Capital, and the present with the Interest.—Borrowing, when we cannot impose, is taking Advantage of the Confidence of the People, and ruining the Government.—Result of the Doctrine of Mr. Necker.

IN every age it was agreed in France, that in the necessity of choosing between the scourge of loans and the scourge of taxes, that of loans was the most dangerous, by its fatal and inevitable consequences. Taxation was preferred, because it has certain limits, beyond which the sovereign, notwithstanding his military power, could not pass. Even in the nature of imposts our kings had a barrier to their authority; instead of which, the system of loans has no other bounds but the suspicions of an unsuspecting people, and the loss of credit.

Mr. Necker's appointment to the administration, who would be under no obligations to the natural riches of France by the means of taxes,

but, on the contrary, resorted to loans and the transferring of debts, to defray the extraordinary expences of war, was the scourge of his department and also of the monarchy. Mr. Necker found the state already in arrears, and he loaded it with fresh interest, entailing on future generations the care of paying the capital proceeding from his loans. He loaded it, besides, both with the expences of administration and the payment of interest; so that, rejecting the plan of taxation, the state, in the end, was obliged, sooner or later, to pay the same sum; besides the extraordinary expence of administration, which might, in great measure, have been avoided by annual imposts. Thus Mr. Necker only took the burden off the present generation, to throw it on the shoulders of posterity.

This is not all: we must examine if the state, after the surcharge in 1777, could impose fresh taxes on the people, or could not. In the first case, Mr. Necker, by the system of loans, oppressed France with the expence and interest of the cultivation of lands, which was money entirely sunk. In the next place he borrowed without a possibility of repaying. Since the year 1778, therefore, the loan had become an instrument to effect two operations. It was a certain way of ruining a nation already deeply in debt: and the ephemeral and casual credit of a director-

general was only the mean of palliating, procrastinating, and augmenting inevitable destruction; since *borrowing*, to prevent *imposing*, while there is a possibility of imposing, was entirely losing the interests to no purpose; or, if the state could impose no longer, it was deceiving the unsuspecting lender. In the first instance, government throws away the expence and interest of cultivation; and in the second, the state must cancel its accumulated debt by a bankruptcy.

Mr. Necker, in one of his publications, becomes his own judge. He evidently demonstrates the natural boundary of taxes, and the excess of loans. Let us consult him in his treatise *On the Administration of* the finances of France, vol. ii. p. 380, on the nature of loans and imposts.

" The power of borrowing," says he, " cannot fail to become the most serviceable instrument of ambition and warlike propensities. By the aid of loans we are able to expend three or four hundred millions, instead of forty or fifty that might have been raised, perhaps, with great exertion by the means of extraordinary imposts; thus, like every forcible method imperceptibly applied, the power of borrowing is become fatal to nations.....Does not good proceed from the excess of evil? Will not nations, burdened by

an immense debt, and proportionate taxes, be arrested in their undertakings? Undoubtedly. It is to similar circumstances that we are indebted, very frequently, for the return of tranquillity; and at the moment that flattery recites the eulogium of princes, sacred truth, perhaps, will only have to record their weakness."

We perceive that Mr. Necker was aware of the danger of loans. As to the practicability of taxation, (still practicable in France even at the moment of his retreat, 1781) his successor proved it could be done. He did it.

Thus, whether it was to relieve the present generation, whether it was to make the cruel trial of being able to carry on the war without taxation, or whether it was to maintain his situation against the united attacks of placemen and nobility, Mr. Necker furnished, by the means of loans, such sums as France was unable to afford. In this point of view, therefore, it was the scourge of France; as borrowing without certain means of repaying, is a robbery and an abuse of the confidence of the people, who must withdraw their support; while borrowing and repaying increases the burden of the loan by the addition of interest, and the waste and expence of new cultivation, without any essential advantage.

Mr. Necker was not ignorant of these alter-

natives; but he asserted, as a proof of the goodness of his plan, that England had supported her system of loans by publishing the connexions between the receipts and the expences, together with the resources and the general operations of the administration, to show that they keep pace with the expenditure; but these loans, a natural resource of free states, were the *maximum* of the efforts of France, a country so differently situated. The exposition of public accounts ought to be uninterrupted and periodical, and that with great exactness. And what resource would France be able to find, if an inconsiderate court, consisting of young people, should expend more than her revenues, or if the rival powers wished to take advantage of our distress? A revolution or a bankruptcy, or the ineffectual definitive resort to loans, without publicity, or dressed in a deceitful publicity, must ruin the government. Such was the frightful alternative to which the system of loans had nearly reduced us. The hurry of incapacity, united with bankruptcy and revolution, distinguished the system of the director; and government, under Mr. Necker, abused its authority so far as to imprison the miserable hawkers of publications containing observations on the destructive system of loans.

Lewis XVI. was thus constantly deceived by

the loans of Mr. Necker. He had been always persuaded, that the number of renters, increasing each day by the loans, multiplied the number of Frenchmen devoted by their fortune to the authority and person of the monarch, who thus held their fortunes in his hands. The king was told, that by laying on no fresh imposts, he was adored in his dominions; they cited the example of England, where the immensity of property in rents weakened the republican virtues, by accustoming a considerable part of the nation to fear a revolution in the affairs of government.

An effect contrary to these promises manifested itself in France in 1789: the lenders on annual income, being in their nature either egotists or dastards, were the first to demand a revolution of the nation against the government. The first revolutionists, it is true, declared their debts sacred, and placed them in the general class of property; but have they not seen it impaired, in the sixth year of the republic, by the military order of government?

M. de Calonne, in attacking the ministry of Mr. Necker, accused him of having borrowed four hundred and forty millions; the interest of which sum, according to M. Calonne, was an annual expence of forty millions to the government.

Mr. Necker answered, reckoning the sum-

total of loans and interest at a superior rate: "the loans under my administration," said he, "amounted to ninety millions more. M. de Calonne is mistaken in taking the interest at nine or ten per cent.; it only amounted to eight and three-eighths per cent., by adding the perpetual interests, annuities, and annual payments." .....So that the sums raised by loan, according to Mr. Necker's account, amounted to five hundred and thirty millions, and the interest thereof to forty-five millions.

CHAP. XIV.

Administration of Mr. Necker in 1780.—Sale of the Hospital Lands, and Establishment of the Houses of Charity.—Suppression of forty-eight Offices of Receivers-General.—Revolution in the King's Farms.—Establishment of new Prisons.—Continuation of the Establishment of Provincial Assemblies.—Assembly of Moulins.

MR. NECKER had not yet explained himself on the fate of the farmers-general. The nation was silently anxious to know if the administration would be adopted, and the leases renewed.

The farmers-general stirred up a powerful party against him, as they were allied by marriage to the great men of the state: the leaseholders were against his principles. Mr. Necker adopted a medium, which was not at all pleasing to the former. In renewing the leases, he did away the custom of the *loaves and fishes*, and showed himself no more generous than M. Turgot.

As to the reversions, they were abolished, which increased the number of complaints and enemies; and these enemies were chiefly duchesses and favourites.

The suppression of the forty-eight offices of receivers-general caused a number of vexations and obstacles, on account of the protection they found at court.

The sale of the hospital lands, which did not produce a revenue of above two or three per cent. is one of those daring operations which no government had ever before permitted, and which has no example, but in the measures adopted by the revolutionary government.

In the first place, these lands were the gift of piety, to remain for ever in the hands of the administrators of the hospitals, and to secure, by certain revenues, an asylum for the sick, independent of a licentious court. No person knew its value better than Mr. Necker; and he provided for the sick by the sale of their property. At the same time he was employed, together with his wife, in changing the form of the hospitals, and establishing houses of charity. It has been found by long experience, that in every nation certain public expences must be covered by funds separate from, and independent of, the good or bad situation of the public treasury; and, certainly, the case of the sick was, without doubt, in the class of expences that ought incessantly to be supplied with ready and permanent resources. Mr. Necker established hospitals without revenues, and destroy-

ed those that possessed any. The opposition observed, on this subject, that an hospital without revenues was no more than a precarious institution, and could have no foundation in a state where the will of the king was as absolute as that of the king of France. This operation was not prevented. It was to raise money. The tacit consent of the court proved the danger of the law.

Mr. Necker this year still found new funds: he instituted a new provincial assembly at Moulins, and reformed the abuses of the interior of prisons.

CHAP. XV.

Personal Opinions of Lewis XVI. on the System of Provincial Administrations developed at first under Lewis XV. by M. d'Argenson, in his 'Considerations on France,' and since then by the Economists, by Messrs. Turgot and Malesherbes, and by Mr. Necker.—Marginal Notes of Lewis XVI. written in the Memorandum of Provincial Administrations instituted by Mr. Necker.—Considerations on the Revolution effected in the Administration of the Provinces.

MIRABEAU the elder, in his celebrated work, entitled *The Friend of Man*, proposed the establishment of provincial states, abolished by Lewis XIII. and his successor, Lewis XV. presented the question of their re-establishment to his council; but it was constantly rejected; because these assemblies were considered as authorities which suspended, modified, or attenuated the royal authority, and as assemblies of proprietaries which might form some resistance in case of taxation.

Under the administration of the duke of Choiseul, the project of the re-establishment was renewed; but the council still opposed it on the same account.

We have seen, that M. Turgot's plan for their

re-establishment in all the provinces that had been deprived of them by authority, was rejected by Lewis XVI. In spite of these dispositions, Mr. Necker, in 1778, persuaded that monarch to adopt them; and these institutions, heterogeneous in the social edifice constructed in France by cardinal Richelieu, were the first supporters of the revolution.

Mr. Necker, in order to succeed, made no more mention of annihilating the constitution of the three orders. More cautious than M. Turgot, and profiting by his errors, he proposed these institutions as simple trials, to be made in a province. The high administration of the elective countries, composed of intendants, conceived a dislike to them; which was so much the more dangerous to Mr. Necker, as it was concealed. Mr. Necker deprived them of the confidence of the king; and converted into simple commissaries, in the state-countries, men who, till then, had been considered as the absolute administrators of the provinces. It is necessary to hear the reasons of Mr. Necker, and the wise observations which the weak Lewis opposed to his maxims. The minister this time also was more powerful than the monarch.

Mr. Necker.—A multitude of complaints have been made, in every age, against the form

of administration employed in the provinces; they are now more than ever renewed; and it is impossible to remain indifferent to them without, perhaps, incurring some self-reproach.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—In every age, also, there have been very strong complaints against the form of administration in the state-countries.

Mr. NECKER.—Scarcely, in effect, can we give the name of administration to this arbitrary will of one man, who sometimes present, sometimes absent, sometimes well informed, and sometimes ignorant, is appointed to manage the most important departments of public order, who only considers his place as a ladder for his ambition. These are the men who are timid towards the powerful, and arrogant towards the weak; they constantly invest themselves with the royal authority.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—In the state-countries, also, there are few members of the administrative assemblies that do not regard their employment as a ladder.

Mr. NECKER.—In the elective countries there is no legal opposer of the commissaries; and, unless we are enlightened by glaring injustice, or some public scandal, we are obliged to see through the same medium as the very man we might desire to judge.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—This observation deserves reflexion.

Mr. NECKER.—Your majesty may easily form an idea of the abuse, and almost the ridicule, of this pretended administration. When long-continued murmurs degenerate into general complaints, parliament interferes, and places itself between the king and his people.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—But if they should unite with the administrations?

Mr. NECKER.—It is only in a single generality that I would advise your majesty to introduce a change, which should consist in the trial of a provincial or municipal administration, or *commission of proprietaries*, leaving the commissary charged with the important task of representing their operations to government. By these means your majesty would acquire additional guarantees of the happiness of your people. Sub-delegates, officers of election, directors, receivers, collectors of land-tax, excise-officers, visitors, clerks, &c. all belonging to the imposts, each one in his situation, would subject to their little authority all those who ought to contribute.

Remarks of LEWIS XVI.—The presidents born, the counsellors, the members, and the agents of the state-countries composing the establishments, do not render the French more

happy in the countries subjected to their administration. Bretany, it is very certain, is not happier with her states, than Normandy is without them.

Mr. NECKER.—A wise equilibrium between the three orders of the state, whether separate or confounded; a sufficient number of *representatives*, who, without embarrassing, will be sufficient to guarantee the wishes of the province; some plain method of keeping the accounts; the being obliged to submit all deliberations to the approbation of the council, instructed by the commissary; an agreement to pay the same sum as usual into the royal treasury; the simple power of making observations in case of new demands, so that the king's will may be known thereon, and never thwarted; the *gratuitous gift* absolutely interdicted, and the appellation of *countries of administration* substituted for *countries of state*, in order that the resemblance of names may never lead them to similar pretensions: this is an abridged idea of the essential conditions.

Remarks of LEWIS XVI.—I do not think it prudent to abolish the words *gratuitous gift*; first, because this term is ancient, and attaches the lovers of form; next, it is perhaps right to leave my successors a term which teaches them

to depend on the love of their subjects, and not to dispose of their property by military force.

Mr. NECKER.—This would be a great advantage, by multiplying the means of credit, and giving to new provinces the faculty of borrowing. It would be a greater, in binding closer the proprietaries to their provinces, by investing them with some public employments, which they would know how to appreciate. This inconsiderable part of administration would revive expiring patriotism, and, uniting activity and knowledge, must produce the most flattering advantages to the state.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—All the establishments are greatly in debt. To create others, and increase the difficulty, would be burdening the French like the English. Could there not be another method found?

Mr. NECKER.—Will they not say, that trusting the assessment of imposts to a municipal administration is diminishing authority? The royal authority is established on a basis that cannot be shaken. It is the power of imposing which constitutes essentially the greatness of the sovereign. The assessment of imposts, and other executive departments, are only emanations of the monarch's confidence. The grand art of the present administrators is to promote

confusion: they would wish that respect to their most arbitrary commands were one of the greatest interests of royalty. To avoid exposing so often the royal authority, it should not be so incessantly exerted.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—The doctrine of the gratuitous gifts of the clergy and the state-countries will scarcely permit us to interfere in such delicate affairs.

Mr. NECKER.—Every discussion with the parliaments and assistant courts for the twentieths, the poll-tax, the land-tax, and tenants' labour, would be prevented by a different administration: authority is often lost, when it is not victorious, by such continual disputes.

Remark of LEWIS XVI. — Observe what happens among bodies to whom power is confided every day.

Mr. NECKER.—Would it not be better if your majesty's authority should become the arbitrator between the states and your people, and interfere only to mark the limits between rigour and justice?

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—The essence of my authority is not intermediate, but supreme.

Mr. NECKER.—Your majesty has more natural security for good order among the nobility and clergy, than among the judges and proprietaries in office. The parliaments, in the cessa-

tion of their functions, still possess a dangerous weapon; the sole power of decrees, and inflicting disgrace and imprisonment, gives them so much influence over the receivers of the public revenues, that is sufficient to hinder, for a time, the execution of the king's orders. So far, therefore, from considering the institution of well-concerted provincial administrations as an increase of resistance, I do not doubt but kings would find in such a check on the states and parliaments, the means of enforcing their authority with more effect.

Remarks of LEWIS XVI.—The most just and most natural power of the parliaments is that which enables them to condemn to death any robber of the finances. In the supposition of provincial administrations, that power should not be taken away.

Mr. NECKER.—It is not necessary to expatiate on the embarrassments occasioned in some of the state-countries; but it is very easy to perceive, that these embarrassments proceed from ancient conventions with the provinces, which have been permitted to unite themselves with France. From a well-regulated provincial administration might one day be derived a mean of force to correct and perfect the present constitutions of the state-countries, whose very vices obtain a degree of respect.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—It is necessary, for the quiet of my people, to preserve their privileges.

Mr. NECKER.—At the same time that this multiplicity of imposts renders the administration extremely difficult, the public, by a new turn of mind, have opened their eyes to all its inconveniences and abuses. Hence result those restless and confused remonstrances which inspire the parliaments with a continual desire to interfere in the administration: this sentiment becomes every day more manifest; and they begin to adopt the same methods as other bodies that wish to acquire power, by speaking in the name of the people, and calling themselves the defenders of the rights of the nation; and it is not to be doubted, that, although they are neither capable nor desirous of consulting the welfare of the state, they well persuade themselves, by constant interference in public concerns, that they are supported by public opinion. This support, therefore, must either be taken from them, or we may prepare for repeated contests, which must disturb the tranquillity of your majesty's reign, and at length lead to a degradation of authority, or to such consequences as are not to be computed.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—Observe what the states of Bretany perform periodically.

Mr. NECKER.—The only means of preventing the shock, and to secure essentially the peaceful and honourable functions of the magistracy, is to conceal from their continual observation the grand object of administration; particularly as it may be accomplished by an institution, which, in gratifying the desire of the nation, will equally answer the ends of government.

Remark of LEWIS XVI.—Is it more expedient to entrust the controul of the affairs of administration to the administrative bodies? Or is it wiser to consign them to judiciary bodies?

Such were the individual opinions of the king; but his will was in such a state of impotence, that, in spite of his knowledge, and, above all, of his foresight, the minister concerted his views and projects, presented them, and the monarch executed, by an assent of confidence and weakness, without resistance. The ideas and the will of government were no longer in the king. Mr. Necker, on his part, did not err from inexperience. We observe, in the destructive reforming systems of that skilful man, opposition, disdain, contempt, and combination, against the observations made upon them. He struggles against the opinions which represent the dangers and novelty of his provin-

cial institutions. In vain did he affect to allow them, one by one, with a sort of moderation, modesty, and even of candour;—his successive and procrastinated blows gave a mortal wound to the monarchy of Lewis XVI. His reserve had the effect of awakening in each country of intendance the desire of a metamorphosis to state-countries. M. Turgot had been dismissed for having inspired Lewis XVI. with a fear of changing the royal administration of his monarchy into popular administrations, without nobility and clergy. Mr. Necker, more cautelous, wishing to avoid the insurrection of the orders against his fragile existence, so foreign to the natural economy of the state, respected this hierarchy; and instead of abolishing all at once the numerous bodies of intendants, the word trial, the innovating spirit of the times, and the cries of the elective countries, demanding provincial administration, operated partially and by degrees what the director was incapable of effecting altogether, by reason of the oppositions of the council to that part of his proceedings.

France was thus changed, by the effect of these silent and prudent measures, from a state of absolute monarchy, to a still more uncertain, and, as it were, preparatory situation; which, by increasing, in the interior of the provinces,

discussions on the rights of proprietaries, and on the imposts, led us on to the more dangerous subject of the royal authority.

In exploring the administrations of Languedoc, Bearn, Burgundy, and Bretany, the French found only reason to deplore the periodical quarrels between the court and the assemblies. When all the proprietaries were called to the administration, the intention of Mr. Necker was accomplished. Richelieu had taken pains to keep the provincial proprietaries as far as possible from the knowledge of administrative affairs, and entrusted them to families on which the king might depend. Mr. Necker, by putting the contrary method in practice, had broken the ties of administration which communicated with the state, rendered it dependent on the views and interests of proprietaries, and complicated the machine. It was no longer the king that acted solely on his own account; but the proprietaries were authorised to administer for their personal interests: in this alone consists the revolution of Mr. Necker. The necessities of the state were the principal motive of the demands made on the proprietaries; and the natural preponderance of property was authorised to introduce itself into the new administrations.

Mr. Necker's provincial assemblies were besides instituted in such a manner, that their de-

pendence on the state might one day become void. The king had named sixteen proprietaries, three of which were chosen from among the clergy, five from the nobility, and eight from the inhabitants of towns and villages. These sixteen administrators had the privilege of choosing thirty-six others. Government had the power, at the commencement of these institutions, to reserve the faculty of election. The conduct of an administration towards government ought to have been more conformable to the genius of the state. In consecrating the principle, that election received its power and administrative prerogative from the immediate choice of the sovereign, the spirit of the state was preserved: while the independence of the administrations and the definition of their rights proceeding from property, were the result of the destructive reflexions which had conducted the director-general to discover the opposition of the two elections, the former of which was royal, and the latter were strangers to the sovereign.

Mr. Necker has not concealed his intentions in the establishment of provincial assemblies: they were evidently the same as those of M. Turgot. He says in his writings, that he wished to call the nation to the management of their affairs; give protectors and guides to the pro-

vinces; attach the citizens to the public welfare, and fix their attention upon it. He said, that he intended to excite public spirit, and that the moment it became necessary to act like Richelieu, he could no longer interfere with business.

In this manner did Mr. Necker transform our peaceful provinces into deliberating provinces, and began the revolution relative to ancient policy. A central deliberating assembly near the king was still wanting to this system, for the consummation of his project, and for the ruin of ancient France. Mr. Necker had left nothing undone to prepare the state for this subversion. The administrators appointed by the king had, till his time, the management of the state. Mr. Necker had given it to the people. And what became of the established power, which could neither exist without imposts, nor establish any but by assemblies of proprietaries interested in the opposition? The monarchy was already become a mixed state.

CHAP. XVI.

Dismissal of M. de Sartines.—His party publishes at Paris the Means by which Mr. Necker succeeded therein.

BY destroying the administrations depending on the will of the king, and by setting up authorities composed of proprietaries, Mr. Necker on the other side worked a revolution in the ministry; he overthrew the ministers whose first principle was devotion to the absolute authority of the king.

The chevalier de Clonard presented to M. de St. James a bill of exchange of a hundred thousand livres, drawn upon him by his treasurer, resident in the colonies. The payment of it was refused by order of Mr. Necker, but afterwards effected by order of the king in his council of state.

Mr. Necker on this circumstance brought forward strong complaints against M. de Sartines: he told the king, that this minister, having obtained one hundred and ten millions for the ordinary use of the marine, and sixteen for extraordinary and secret services, had augmented his expences by seventeen millions. Mr. Necker added, that the kingdom of France

could not support M. de Sartines, who affected to represent the expences of his administration as incalculable; but that the administration of the finances being obliged to calculate them, he could no longer grant such an expence. Mr. Necker, in consequence, offered his resignation, for the last time, if M. de Sartines was not dismissed that very day; and he represented M. de Castries as a man of probity, well adapted to take the situation of minister of the marine.

M. de Maurepas was at Paris, ill of the gout, and M. de Castries was at Limours, where he had agreed to meet M. de Choiseul, who was secretly intriguing in the affairs of administration *. The king, at the very term of dilapidation mentioned by Mr. Necker, no longer hesitated. He kept his minister of the finances, and dismissed M. de Sartines, whom all the capital accused of prevarication.

M. de Sartines' secret proceedings against Mr. Necker were developed in the defence which he published against the accusations of the minister of the finances. "My vexation," said he, "arises not so much from having lost my place, as from the dreadful motives which are supposed to have caused my disgrace."

* M. de Castries belonged to the queen's party; but was a secret enemy of the Austrian system.

"From the representations of the board of controul, all Paris suppose that I have an annual income of one hundred thousand livres, and that, by my private authority, I have been criminal enough to exceed my expences, limited by his majesty, by seventeen millions. I declare, that I have not an annual income of twenty thousand livres. If any more can be found, I will forfeit it to the hospitals. As to the second crime, I only desire, for my justification, that the orders signed by the king in council, or in committee held in the presence of the principal ministers, should be made public. The result was a secret of the state. If I had dropped a single word of it to Mr. Necker, a foreigner, connected for some time past with lord Stormont, sworn to no office, nor acknowledged by either the parliaments or the courts of aid, a prison was the price of my indiscretion. I have expended, I honestly acknowledge, one hundred and forty-three millions; that is to say, one hundred and ten for ordinary, and sixteen for secret, expences. The latter have exceeded, by seventeen millions, the statement of which Mr. Necker has a duplicate. But the seventeen millions were decreed by the king himself, and I am in possession of his orders to that effect. Mr. Necker makes me culpable for having termed the ex-

pences of the marine *incalculable*; but it is evident, that I wished it to be understood, that the risks or uncertainties of the moment prevented my ascertaining, with arithmetical precision, the expences of the navy. Can it be possible that Mr. Necker, culpable with regard to me, is ungrateful enough towards M. de Maurepas, to advise the king to make and unmake a minister, without communicating it to the prime-minister? And if he had communicated it, M. de Maurepas, who was never absent when the king's orders were given for secret expences, would have justified me."

M. de Sartines also added, that the expenditure of seventeen millions had been decided on by M. de Maurepas and M. de Vergennes, in presence of the king, from the following motives. "M. de Vergennes," said he, "had been informed, in the month of April preceding, of the distress of the Americans; they wanted provisions, ammunition, clothing, and even artillery; and, in the before-mentioned secret committee, it was resolved to relieve them. Their distress and relief were the secret of the state; and it was agreed to conceal it from Mr. Necker, above all, on account of his former connexions with a country, that rendered him entirely unfit to be made acquainted with our decisions. How then was it possible to raise

seventeen millions without the knowledge of Mr. Necker?" M. de Sartines proposed, that Lewis XVI. should augment the receipt of his department to three millions per month; and this method appeared the best. The king granted it, as also did the committee. M. de Sartines did not act, however, according to form in this circumstance; he ought to have had the king's signature before he had given an order of such a nature to his treasurer, because the treasurer was afterwards sacrificed for having executed the individual order of the minister. Mr. Necker, on his part, and Dufresne, his clerk, perceiving every month an augmentation of three millions of expence in the marine department, waited till the sum became considerable, in order to alarm the king, whom they believed unacquainted with this expenditure of the public money, and took advantage of the illness of M. de Maurepas to accuse M. de Sartines of high-treason. The king not having M. de Maurepas near him, and not suspecting that Mr. Necker, who was under the orders of M. de Maurepas, had accused him without that minister's consent, appointed M. de Castries as his successor. Going afterwards to see M. de Maurepas, he was informed, that M. de Sartines had only neglected the form, which consisted in

causing the private decisions of the king to be signed.

This dismissal of M. de Sartines, together with the absence of M. de Maurepas, procured Mr. Necker the civilities of the courtiers. They imagined that he was about to obtain that influence over the king's mind which M. de Maurepas had lost. Mr. Necker directed all his batteries against the prime-minister, and succeeded in obtaining the dismissal of M. de Montbarrey; but the king concealed the contempt which M. de Maurepas and M. de Sartines had inspired him with, above all when the friends of Mr. Necker reported about Paris, that M. de Maurepas was insane, and that he was actually deprived of the confidence of the king. The situation of the old minister and that of Mr. Necker were such, that they waited in silence, both in Paris and at court, to know which of the two would be honoured with the monarch's preference. At this conjuncture, Mr. Necker resolved to make a grand explosion, by publishing the *Compte rendu*, " Account delivered," a remarkable epoch in the history of the political events of this reign.

CHAP. XVII.

Publication of the 'Compte rendu' by Mr. Necker; this Institution is a Revolution apposite to the Spirit of the ancient Government.—Of the Credit of the State established by the Corporations of the Finances.—Of the same Credit established by the Bankers.—Of the same Credit resulting from the Publication of the Accounts.—This Guarantee was void in France.—Mr. Necker, by his Innovations, tended to destroy Credit in France, in point of Loans; and the Royal Authority, in point of Imposts.

MR. NECKER, at the time of the publication of his *Compte rendu*, was assailed by a great variety of dissatisfied parties. The answers he returned to the clamours of the greatest part of his enemies, in the different chapters of this work, seemed to imply, that he wished to justify himself on the one hand, and, on the other, to augment the fervour of his partisans. He was about to oppose one storm to another, and disseminate troubles in the state.

The work, by inflaming his enemies against him, redoubled, in reality, the zeal of his faction. This great effect was the only way to make a diversion in his favour, and dispel the

thunder that rolled about him, menacing his ministerial existence. The count de Maurepas, who had not courage to oppose its publication, or who wished, as others assert, to suffer the Genevan's insults against the monarchy to multiply and accumulate, seeing this *Compte rendu* stitched up in blue marble paper, had the malice to call it the *blue account*, and the name was continued. The great men of the state, the intendants, the financiers, the friends of the ancient government, and the officers of Monsieur and the count d'Artois, never called it by any other name.

Submitting to the tribunal of the public the operations of the finance, and the state of the royal treasury, was another revolution in France. The director, by removing credit, in taking it from the corporations of the finances, which he had destroyed, humiliated, dispersed, and stirred up against him, ought to have perceived, that, by this event, he made this credit float and wander about without effect and without foundation. Credit was driven, in fact, from the departments of finance to the companies of the bankers. It was the actual resource of government; but that resource was very contrary to the spirit of the monarchy, having no other security than a company of monied men, at liberty to lend or to refuse; while the destroyed

companies of finance possessed supplies which could never escape from the monarch's demands. Mr. Necker had abandoned the imposts, by the institution of provincial administrations, to the debates and probable refusal of the proprietaries; and now he destroyed his credit, by establishing it on independent men, whose refusal was an act for which they had nothing to fear; and, although they might at this time have filled up the loans which he had required of them, this credit was still more uncertain than that which the genius of the state had established in the antecedent administrations, and which had only failed in the most disastrous times, particularly towards the end of the reign of Lewis XIV. In similar circumstances, under the administration of Mr. Necker, an immoderate credit on bankers might conduct the state to extravagant operations, dangerous to its existence. Mis-led by a skilful minister, it might grant excessive loans, and precipitate itself into the greatest calamities. In the preceding system, the corporations of finance were a curb on the state; and, on their decline, Lewis XIV., as well as Lewis XV., had so happily lost the credit which they had abased, that if death had not relieved them, the two monarchs would have seen themselves deprived of every sort of confidence; the first, by

his wars and magnificence; and the second, by his dissoluteness.

Mr. Necker had never paid the least attention to these circumstances; but he was aware, that the credit of a minister with bankers, in a great state, was not only transient and fragile, but he aggravated the fault by making public his accounts, and thereby exposing the resources of the state, which the ancient finance had managed differently, and with less danger to the royal authority.

Mr. Necker must undoubtedly have perceived the difference between the ancient credit and the artificial credit which he had substituted. Having destroyed the first, he discovered the necessity of deserving the second from the generality of the French; but he was also mistaken in his opinion, when he imagined that the periodical publication of the public accounts would produce it; he might well cite "the immense credit of England, from which arose its principal force in time of war;" and advance, "that making the finances public was the chief cause of the confidence of the English in their administration, and the source of their national credit."

From this credit of England, Mr. Necker concluded, that France, by publishing her annual accounts, would have the same resources,

By this assurance, which we find in the *Compte rendu*, the nation was evidently deceived. In effect, government could still continue, in 1781, to tell the people falsehoods on its intentions, plans, receipts, and expences. They had no other guarantee than the reasonings of Mr. Necker. In England, on the contrary, the people have a variety of more convincing proofs, which assure them that they cannot be deceived in the real state of receipt and expenditure; the parliament, its debates, and its factions of opposition, are sufficient testimonies to the English nation of the verity of the accounts; while, in France, the Bastille was the portion, even under Mr. Necker, of every one who ventured to contradict the assertions of government.

Every one of Mr. Necker's decisions tended, therefore, to deprive the state of the resources which it had, by long experience, established. The king, by degrees, discontinued to signify his will directly to the intendants; he lost his credit by abolishing the corporations of the finances, and created false or uncertain supporters by instituting the custom of exposing the accounts; a method false and illusory, and the last which ought to have been resorted to in France under a weak king, and under a princess so much distinguished for irregular expences.

The design of this publication was chiefly to

disconcert the parties formed by the anterior operations of the minister. Mr. Necker directed his eloquence against the abuses of the court, against the profits of the finance, against the treasurers and receivers-general, and against the expences of the king's household; but, instead of doing away these abuses, he struck at the institutions that had operated both the good and the evil, and gradually, by his destructions, as well as by his establishments, annihilated the royal authority.

Mr. Necker replied to the politicians that wished to concentrate the secrets of administration in a few families of the high finance, or in the magistracy, by saying, they calumniated the French nation; he affirmed, that the people were ready to accept, with good will, of any reform, when they were convinced of the purity of the intention, and when they thought they were beloved and cherished; he said, that France was grateful, both for what beneficent ministers had done, and what they would do; that she seconded them by her homage and confidence; that she wished to render her suffrages useful; and that she aspired to be admitted to the work of public welfare, at least by her sincere and grateful effusions. "By granting this desire," said Mr. Necker, "we may awaken the spirit of genuine patriotism."

These opinions are sublime in works of philosophy, and in romances. A state is supported and governed by equitable laws, and by force that shall make them be respected; it is destroyed by the antecedent ideas. Let us hear what M. de Vergennes says on the subject.

CHAP. XVIII.

Observations remitted to Lewis XVI., and by his Orders, the 3d of May 1781, *on the Effects of the 'Compte rendu,' relative to the Constitution of the State, and on the Character of its Author, considered as a Stranger by his Birth, by his Opinions, and by his Manners, to the Administration of the Finances of France.*

"SIRE,

"YOUR majesty has commanded me to lay before you, in a circumstantial memorial, my individual observations on the inconveniences which may result from your majesty's confidence, in putting into the hands of a *foreigner*, a *republican*, and a *protestant*, the most delicate employment of your kingdom. Your majesty, in observing the abundance of criticisms on the *Compte rendu*, which was published by your majesty's consent, desires to be informed, in a precise manner, what the principal observations on this work are meant to imply.

"I know no person better acquainted than your majesty with the history of your august house. I shall therefore put together, in this short memorial, only a few memorable

incidents of that history, which are the most recent and the best known.

" The happiness of Frenchmen consists so much in repressing incessantly that taste for novelty to which their character perpetually inclines them, that there is no revolution, nor any memorable event in our history, that is not indebted for its pernicious effects to the dangerous principles infused into the state by men who are strangers to our manners, and whose ambition and intrigue have conducted them too often to the very helm of the affairs of your majesty's august house.

" The confederate wars, the assassination of two monarchs that resulted from them, the torrent of blood which still flowed in the reign of the illustrious chief of your line, had no other principle than the secret projects of foreigners, who had assumed places in the government. Nature had not taught Frenchmen to obey them; and their commands, contradictory to our maxims, created the sanguinary oppositions which desolated France.

To the civil wars of the confederacy succeeded the scenes and the tragedies of *la fronde* *. Your majesty is informed, that the princes, the magistracy, and the capital, united against the stranger, whose tricks and schemes, different

* Appellation given to the party formed against Mazarin. —*(Translator.)*

from our manners, had gained the confidence of government. Lewis XIV., delivered from the guardianship of Mazarin, so well appreciated the nature of this inconvenience, that, after having taken the reins of government into his own hand, he was careful never to employ, in any department, men whom the French, in their laudable pride, could only countenance with repugnance.

" But if Lewis XIV. knew how to preserve his government from the scourge of the influence of strangers, the regent unfortunately suffered himself to be seduced by the projects of a Scotchman, whom wiser kings had had the caution to get rid of. Law, overturning the system of our finances to establish his own, introducing ideas into France that were foreign to an administration, whose method had served to bring about all the prodigies of the reign of Lewis XIV., is a great lesson for this kingdom. That adventurer is an example, that, for a long time, will exhibit to France the danger of innovations in the finances, since he overwhelmed private fortunes, which are the necessary and essential riches of your majesty, in the vortex of his projects.

" These three revolutions, which have happened in France under the august house of Bourbon, were, therefore, brought about by

foreigners. A French administrator is not born with so much audacity. Some consideration is due to his family: he is tied to it, and his prosperity is situated in France. The foreigner, on the contrary, admitted into the government, has something of the adventurer about him, which is displeasing to Frenchmen; and, although the power of the king is absolute, the state must find its interest in not employing it uselessly, for the maintenance of the ambition or the plans of a stranger, called to the administration against the consent of the people. The royal authority, by great prudence and address, may be able, undoubtedly, to support its agents and ministers, in spite of clamours and complaints; but the uncertainty and danger of the consequences of such disputes ſhould be well calculated by a government that endeavours to make foresight one of its maxims, and, I will even add, one of its principal duties.

" Mr. Necker, finding himself a stranger to the maxims and customs of this state, certainly prepared, without knowing or wishing it, some events which are dangerous in the actual state of affairs. Your majesty, by reflecting on the unhappy situation of your ancestors, sometimes tormented by the power of an opulent clergy, independent of the state and subject to a foreign sovereign, and sometimes by the usurped power

of the principal feudatories, enjoys a tranquillity established by the long experience of your ancestors, and by the painful labours of the great ministers who have succeeded in establishing subordination and public respect in France. There now remains neither clergy, nor nobility, nor third estate in France; the distinction is fictitious, merely representative, and without any real authority. The monarch speaks; all are reduced to a level; all are ready to obey. Is not France, in this state, the arbitrator of her rights abroad, and extremely flourishing at home?

"Mr. Necker does not appear to be satisfied with this happy state. Our necessary evils, and the abuses derived from this position, are monsters in his eyes: instead of seizing the majestic combination of this harmony, he only perceives its defects, and he forms thereon a mass of evil, which he pretends to reform, and thereby procure himself the fame of a Solon or a Lycurgus.

"Your majesty has commanded me to speak freely: I obey.—A dispute is entered into between the ancient government of France and the government of Mr. Necker. If his ideas prevail over those which long experience has consecrated, Mr. Necker, with his Genevese and protestant plans, like Law, Mazarin, and the Lorraine princes,

will be ready to establish in France a system in the finance, a confederacy in the state, or a mockery of the established administration. *A system*, which overturns the order of property, from whence the riches of the state are derived; *a faction*, which stirs up the three orders of the state, one against the other; or a *fronde*, that will unite all of them against the administrative power, which had made them satisfied and tractable. Such is the character of the inhabitants in France, that it is necessary to profess the religion of the state, to insure the submission of the people and the confidence of the great. It is necessary to be born of a distinguished race, or at least to profess the received principles to which a long experience has attached the hope of the people, in order to manage with effect the affairs of the king. Mr. Necker, on the contrary, has conducted his administration in such a manner, so contrary to his predecessors, that at this moment he is suspected by the clergy, is odious to the great men of the state, detested beyond measure by the high finance, and despised by the magistracy. His *Compte rendu* is, in fact, nothing more than an appeal to the people, the pernicious effects of which, to the monarchy, cannot yet be felt nor foreseen. Mr. Necker, it is true, has deserved

the splendid eulogiums of philosophy, and of the innovators of the present day; but your majesty has appreciated, for some time past, the merit and character of this support. Mr. Necker is also applauded by all those who entertain the consolatory idea, that he will institute no more imposts. But your majesty has already equally formed an opinion of this resource. It is evident, that if the present age be exempt from any forced contribution, the plans of Mr. Necker must oppress that which is to come. And what a prospect is this, sire? how afflicting to examine it! It is that of a state involved in debts of established taxes, involved in debts of interest accumulated annually by Mr. Necker, sinking into the fatal situation, which it is not permitted me to describe, your majesty's delicacy and justice having proscribed it from the moment of your ascension to the throne. Such, sire, must be the result of an administration entirely occupied in enforcing the system of loans, and depreciating the system of imposts.

"As to his *Compte rendu*, sire, I shall confine my observations to the seventh paragraph of that work, to demonstrate, in a plain manner, how strange and pernicious the person and works of Mr. Necker ought to appear to every honest administrator of the state.

" Mr. Necker asserts, that the state has constantly made a mystery of the situation of the finances. He says, that our kings have only spoken of them in the preambles of their edicts; he advances, that their orders have lost all authority; he affirms, that experienced men no longer believe in it; and, that the moral character of the minister of the finances is become the only safeguard of the monarch. Mr. Necker, in consequence, proposes to found the confidence of the people on a more solid basis; he asserts, that advantage has been taken of the veil thrown over the finance, to obtain, in the bosom of disorder, *a credit that the state did not merit.* He says, that when a state is in confusion, the publicity of accounts becomes useful; and he assures us, that when a man of his character has solicited for an examination of his accounts, no one after him can be offended by submitting to the rule.

" Suppositions so strange, appear to me to merit your majesty's very particular attention. It is certain that twenty-thousand copies of the *Compte rendu* are at this moment disposed of. Thus, twenty-thousand Frenchmen, who are desirous of being acquainted with your majesty's affairs, are informed, that the king's word is considered as void, in the preamble of the edicts, by his present minister of the finances.

It is said, that, in every part of France, experienced men no longer believe in the royal word, and that the moral character of the minister is the only safeguard of the state. No, sire,—and it is not a sentiment of flattery that animates me,—it is not the virtue of Mr. Necker that procured your majesty the sums which the lenders have advanced since your majesty's accession to the throne; it is to the monarch, so remarkable for his delicacy and probity, it is, I dare assert, to you alone. Mr. Necker has only obtained just and clamorous censures on the shameful and unfair manner of his loans. He will not be able to persuade France, that he is your majesty's only and ulterior security. He will nourish the malignity of the small number of disaffected, by declaring, that the state in disorder was not deserving of credit; but I am well assured both of the national character and of the devotion of Frenchmen. If the events of the last reign have fatigued them, the new reign has revived every sentiment of loyalty. The example of England, where the national accounts are made public, is that of a restless, plodding, and selfish people. His comparison is an insult to the French character, which is generous, unsuspecting, and entirely devoted to the regal authority. All is lost in France, if your majesty suffer your ministers to cite the

English administration, to which your predecessors, sire, have shown so strong and just an aversion. I shall carry my animadversions no further on the abhorrence which Mr. Necker has testified to the administration which he found established in his department. I leave your majesty to reflect on the observations you have commanded me to make on the contradiction of the principles and measures of Mr. Necker, with the measures and principles which have made this kingdom the most powerful and the most important European monarchy that exists. Experience and facts attest what we have been, and what we now are; and, if Mr. Necker can ascertain what we shall be, I cannot see therein an equivalent certainty.

"I can venture to assert, without fear of deceiving your majesty, that the state to this day has never been insulted but in the writings of the disaffected, who are hired for the purpose of defamation, or to whom nature has given a sour and unhappy disposition. It is, therefore, a new and remarkable occurrence in our history, that Mr. Necker should appeal to the public opinion, that, under a gracious king, under a monarch who is the friend of his people, the minister of the finances should become the only security, the only guarantee, by his virtues, for the lenders and for the enlightened people

who watch the government. Your majesty will be a long time in healing the wound, inflicted on the dignity of the throne by the very person established by the state to protect it, and to make it respected by the people."

CHAP. XIX.

Situation of Mr. Necker at Court, after the Dismissal of M. de Sartines, and after the Publication of the 'Compte rendu'—How the Storm that menaced him was momentarily raised—He continues to be reproached by the Courtiers, the Parliaments, the Party of M. de Maurepas, the Intendants of Provinces, and the High Finance—Nomenclature of the Ladies and Noblemen of the Court who were Partisans of his Administration,—Character of the Ladies de Grammont, the Countess of Brionne, the Princess of Beauvau, the Countess of Tessé, Madame de Blot, Madame de Châlons, and the Countess of Simiane.—Fury of the Friends and Enemies of Mr. Necker on his Account—Agitation of the divided Minds—Horoscope of France, on Mr. Necker, presented to Lewis XVI.

THE opposition raised againt Mr. Necker before the publication of the *Compte rendu* had been turbulent. The publication of that work inflamed his friends and enemies. Reproaches were heard on every side; personalities on his birth, and calumnies against his probity, re-commenced. They printed and reprinted, that he arrived from Geneva with only fifty crowns; they reported, that he became cash-keeper to a banker, and that he had made a

great fortune by stock-jobbing. On a similar occasion, the archbishop of Narbonne, president-born of the states of Languedoc, had taken the liberty to reproach Fléchier, bishop of Nismes, who was in open opposition to him in the council of the states, with being the son of a tallow-chandler: "If your father had been a tallow-chandler," replied Fléchier, "like mine, you would have been a candle-maker to this day."

Mr. Necker was reproached with things of another nature.

"M. Turgot," said they, "being nominated minister of the finances by Lewis XVI., engaged every one's attention; when Mr. Necker, ambitious and jealous, forgot the protection he had experienced from Turgot, broke off his ancient connexion with him, publishes his book on corn to oppose that minister, and, in a moment of revolution, rings against him the alarm-bell.

"This alarm-bell, which might have conducted Mr. Necker to the Bastille, opened to him the gates of the administration. Every thing, however, seemed calculated to exclude him; his origin, his situation, and his religion; but he surmounted all obstacles. M. Turgot being dismissed, the Genevese banker undertook to prove that his successor, M. de Clugny, cal-

culated ill the state of the finances, and that he was not acquainted with the resources; he asserted, that he was himself alone capable of finding them; he said it, and he was believed. To get a protestant into the administration, a new road was contrived. In confiding to him the principal functions, they gave the title to M. de Taboureau. This participation displeased him; he gets rid of Taboureau, a phantom of a controller-general, by whom he found himself embarrassed, and he now becomes sole administrator of our finances.

"A banker, invested suddenly with an employment, to which, for the most part, he was a stranger....; a foreigner preferred to the king's subjects....; a protestant entrusted with the most important administration, in a kingdom where protestants are excluded from the most trifling employments, is a strange caprice!...., France has found such effects from trusting to foreigners, as she cannot soon forget. What appears most singular, is, the manner by which Mr. Necker has blinded the French nation since his coming into office, and by which he has inspired enthusiasm in the people; for, in the end, what has he done? He has caused suppressions without reimbursements, reforms without profit, and loans without measure: herein is he admired. To assist the bankers, he

crushes a whole class of citizens, *the financiers*, and distresses an infinite number of families: this is considered quite charming. He attacks their property, and abolishes their purchased employments: no matter, it is only the property of financiers. He strikes at the reputation of those he has pillaged; first he defames them, afterwards completes their destruction, and pity is extinguished by the cries of infatuation. He annihilates intermediate credit; he reduces the resources of France to banking systems; and concentrating credit in the minister of the finances alone, he reduces the state to his own mercy; he creates for himself an unlimited power on the ruin of credit, and all the authorities of finance. This is a profound policy, which is admired, and of which the effects are not doubted. If he should attain, in the end, the summit of his projects, some greater things will be produced. In the mean time he works the greatest miracles. Without taxation, he provides for all the expences of war; not reflecting, that by collecting the money of the people, whether it be by accumulated loans, or by the clandestine augmentation of the ancient levies, he still, in reality, imposes. To increase annuities in a great degree, is much worse than levying on the revenues; the former absorbs the funds, and burdens future generations.

Mr. Necker is aware, that a fickle nation is easily seduced by appearances; he is aware, that to bring over the people, it is necessary to flatter their propensities, and espouse their complaints. No one ever made use of this method with more address; no person ever derived so much advantage from the academic style, to penetrate into the acts of administration, and into the means of supply. These are the causes of present admiration. We are shocked at the egotism which Mr. Necker manifests in his late publication. M. de Maurepas, to whom he is indebted for his preferment, is reduced therein to an absolute nullity; he speaks to the king of France in a severe and dogmatic style, and his arrogance gives to his manner an appearance of greatness of soul, which, at the present day, is much more pleasing to France than the modesty of former times; but this tone of self-sufficiency has not been pleasing to the king.

"As early as the year 1778, Mr. Necker had put into the hands of the king, one of his learned works on the establishment of provincial administrations. In this manuscript, he mal-treated the nobility and clergy; he menaced the existence of the state-countries, attacked the parliaments, and turned the intendants of provinces into ridicule. The parliaments were accused of ignorance, and of very suspicious intentions;

they had neither knowledge, nor inclination, to promote the welfare of the state; the provincial assemblies would be the means of dispensing with the sanctions, and registering of the supply acts; they were, in the hands of Mr. Necker, the first step towards the reformation of the state. The work was adapted to raise the fury of the magistracy. They perceived therein, with dismay, presages of the subversion of the actual forms of the monarchy; they trembled at the criminal views of this foreigner, convicted, by his writings, of having calumniated the whole magistracy, of inspiring a young prince with a bad opinion of his subjects and all the orders, and of aspiring to the total overthrow of the monarchy. It is impossible for them to find a more singular phænomenon in morality, or one, in the examination of the causes of which we could be more interested.

"The publication of the work, against the will of Mr. Necker, disconcerted him, and he talked of resigning. To deny the writing of it, might displease the king, who was in possession of the original. To accuse M. de Maurepas with having published it, in order to incense the three orders of the state against Mr. Necker, was a dangerous measure. He and his council resolved, therefore, to brave the tempest, to distribute the publication, and to exalt it so

high, that censure could not affect it. This method was feeding Mr. Necker's passion for celebrity. M. de Maurepas had no alternative. He had to sustain the shock of the incensed magistracy, or to sacrifice the minister of the finances to his resentment. Mr. Necker was determined to throw into the enemy's camp the bomb by which he was threatened. It had the desired effect: the memorial on the provincial administrations was praised up to the skies, and procured its author the names of Solon, Lycurgus, and restorer of France. The ancient administration was rendered despicable, the courts of justice were insulted, and the first orders of the state were accused of corruption; while the principles of the work tended in one respect to despotism, and in another to anarchy. Nothing more was wanting to produce the phrensy and delirium of the partisans of the novelties Mr. Necker had propagated in France. Even the *Compte rendu* was eclipsed. M. de Castries had told the queen, that the welfare of the state was inseparable from the fate of Mr. Necker, and that every thing was lost, if he should become the victim of the calumnies of his enemies. The minister of the marine had even solicited that princess to animate the resolution of Mr. Necker by some public testimony of favour. The duchess of Polignac, who was

asked to mention it to Maria Antoinetta, answered, that she would never advise the queen to give her opinion in such delicate affairs; but M. Adhémard, who possessed the queen's confidence, together with the prince of Poix, inflamed with zeal for Mr. Necker, as well as the house of Noailles, united themselves to support him against the new attacks brought on by the infidelity of the editor of the memorial.

" Under the reign of the late king, the royal family, rigid observers of etiquette, did not suffer any one to speak of the interior affairs of the king's household. Not even the princes dared to intermeddle with concerns of that nature; and the most favoured courtiers were not allowed to talk to the king or queen of the administration. A greater liberty has since broken these trammels, and, undoubtedly, the cause of truth is thereby promoted; but it may also happen, that the courtiers, who are bad judges of the affairs of administration, may deceive the monarch, and influence the government. It was thus that the queen's attendants persuaded her to give Mr. Necker some public marks of attention, which he communicated to his confidants, and they spread them about with great exaggeration. It was the queen that prevented M. de Maurepas from taking a decisive part against the director-general; and who knows but it was the queen

likewise who induced the king to pacify the first president of the parliament, at the time of the tempest occasioned by the publication of the book on administrations, which abused and vilified the whole of the magistracy.

" Much was wanting, nevertheless, to render Mr. Necker's party very strong. In the class of his true friends, we find the bankers interested in the profit of his operations; we find also the protestants, and some incredulous bishops, who, for the first time, were united in this party. At court we may reckon the Noailles, and all those who are born friends of placemen. After these remarkable personages, come the dupes, the illuminati, the provincials, and the admirers of the grand words, *beneficence*, *reform*, *restoration*, *comfort of the people*, and *liberty*. We find at their heels the *literati*, the abbé Raynal for instance, the periodical writers, the hired applauders, and some ambitious followers.

" We ought to place at the head of these latter, the archbishop of Toulouse, who, without possessing much esteem for the minister of the finances, become his partisan, because, perceiving that he was almost at his last shift, he liked him better than another in the place which he himself coveted, as the mean of aspiring to the rank of Richelieu, Mazarin, and

Fleury. By the side of Loménie was observed the abbé de Vermont.

" The duke of Choiseul is among the number of Mr. Necker's friends, for the following reasons. Mr. Necker finding him to be the leader of the queen's party, gave him to understand, that he promoted his interest with the king, by representing the affairs of his administration in a favourable manner. M. de Choiseul, on his part, finds in Mr. Necker a man capable, by his talents, to sap the preponderating credit of M. de Maurepas, who was the principle obstacle of his return to the power which he regretted. M. de Choiseul, therefore, induces the courtiers of his party to espouse the cause of Mr. Necker at court.

" The marquis of Castries publicly avowed himself Mr. Necker's defender, because he endeavoured to make him minister. His devotion seems compulsory; for it was less from gratitude, than from an idea of making him a step to future greatness.

" Exactly from the same motives, Mr. Necker was protected by the duke of Duchâtelet. Mr. Necker had promised to recommend him to the department of war, or that of foreign affairs. Since places in the administration have been granted to the principal nobility, each of

them endeavours to show himself active in ministerial affairs, and Mr. Necker is become the focus of their intrigues. The prince of Beauvau, who has the administration of Paris in view, or else a place in the council, is faithful to Mr. Necker. The same idea has attached M. d'Adhémar.

" He would not have found so many friends previous to M. de Sartine's dismissal. It had been supposed, that M. de Maurepas, the old Mentor, disposed of the administrations; but the late dismissals had enhanced the consequence of the director of the finances, and those who were seeking employments prostrated themselves before the man who was become capable of making and discarding ministers. They all at once ranged themselves with zeal under his banners; and guessing at his disposition towards M. de Maurepas, *Down with Mentor!* was the war-hoop of the party.

" It was not because Maurepas was disliked. Amiable in society, intelligent in business, and accessible to every one, he had done all the good in his power; but he had been too long in possession of an employment which others desired to occupy; and Mr. Necker was looked upon as the instrument to accomplish his fall. The imperious and intriguing duchess of Grammont had entered the ranks; for, not being

able to forget the supreme rank from which madame Dubarry had precipitated her, she was in hopes, by means of confusion, to soar again into favour.

"Next to her was the arrogant countess of Brionne, who, as well as the former, kept the opinions of the society in awe by her imposing style of behaviour, as the princess of Beauvau did by the brilliancy of her wit, and the countess of Montesson by every seduction of art.

"On another side, among the less important ranks, the enthusiastic countess of Terray exerted herself to make proselytes for Mr. Necker. Farther on, madame de Blot, mistress to M. de Castries, displayed her sentimental jargon. The countess of Châlons induces her lover to support one whom he despises; and the princess d'Hennin, who is at the head of every kind of intrigue, never ceases to applaud the philosophic minister.

"The countess of Simiane, the marchioness of Coigny, the princess of Poix, and many others, are emulous to exalt him; they hunt for new discoveries, spread and gather reports, confirm news, and distribute their orders to *petits-maîtres* and *abbés*, who are continually employed in dancing attendance, and gossipping; so much were they anxious to dignify *public opinion*.

Such is the organisation of the ground-work

of so many heterogeneous interests in favour of Mr. Necker in France; and these are its secret causes and springs. Hence he rises triumphant at the critical moment which seemed to threaten him with destruction. He supposed, that he was now sure of the king; he imagined, that he had escaped the vigilance of the octogenary Argus; and his friends exclaimed, with exultation, *Maurepas will be duped!*

" Unfortunately, the English termed him, *their last and faithful ally on the continent.* Thus, instead of becoming master of the kingdom, as he had flattered himself, the other party asserted, that he would soon return to Geneva. In the concurrence of two dismissals, that of M. de Maurepas, and that of Mr. Necker, the latter was the most probable. His lately-acquired triumph could not be of long duration. France must soon perceive the illusion of his magical representations, and open her eyes to the disorder and faction which the art of necromancy must necessarily produce. The fury of his friends, and that of his enemies, struck him the first blow. Sacerdotal fanaticism, the implacable resentment of the insulted magistracy, the combination of twelve parliaments, their union with the council, the two contrary impressions produced by the memorial on the provincial administrations, in which were found, in favour

of one party, the hope of a despotic power, and of the other, that of republican principles; the strong agitation which resulted from them; the heat of the people's imagination; the encouragement of their murmurs against actual impositions; the future difficulty of causing the administration to be respected, after having consigned it to public censure; and the embarrassment of Mr. Necker himself, when the resources derived from loans should be exhausted, or when he should be necessitated to have recourse to others which he has condemned; all these circumstances seemed to be the true box of Pandora."

Such were the complaints of the parliaments, courtiers, ministers, and intendants of provinces, against Mr. Necker; and such were their prophecies on what would happen to us.

In reality, each operation of the director-general successively demolished the most essential parts of the political edifice of the house of Bourbon. A French cardinal had planned and built it; a Genevese destroyed it.

Mr. Necker, at the time of his coming to the administration, said, that he did not accept it with the intention of having recourse to the measures of Richelieu or Mazarin. By declaring, that he would not preserve an established government, according to anterior regu-

lations, he has incurred the severest reproaches from the friends of a government which he has contributed to ruin, and from the citizens who have suffered from that to which he has brought us. Instead of punishing abuses in his department, he overturns the institutions; and such institutions as had made the French the most industrious people on earth, and which every nation endeavoured to imitate. He discredited and abased, by degrees, every means of power in the house of Bourbon, to gratify himself in causing a revolution, and obtaining the title of *restorer of France.* We cannot, therefore, be surprised at finding such vigorous opposition to his audacious destructions. Instead of curbing his career of reformation, he defied the storm that was raised against him, and persevered in his designs.

CHAP. XX.

Situation of Madame Necker at this Conjuncture—Her Character, her Virtues, her Piety, and her Charity; she exerts herself to relieve the Distresses of the Poor—She alleviates the Sufferings of the Count de Lautrec—The Answer to the Pamphlet published against her Husband is attributed to her. —She refutes the Objections to his Administration.

HISTORY ought not to overlook the conduct of madame Necker at this conjuncture. The virtue, modesty, and talents of mademoiselle Curchaut having attracted the attention of Mr. Necker, these two Genevese were united in the bands of matrimony; and there never was a more edifying and happy alliance. It was founded on mutual esteem, virtue, and the most distinguished talents. This happy pair was mentioned at Paris as an example of conjugal friendship. But how different were their virtues from the manners of the capital and the age in which they lived! Their happiness was treated at court as an object of derision. They were never spoken of with common decency, but in the houses of tradesmen, or in some particular fa-

milies, where virtue still was held in some estimation; so depraved were the general manners of the times.

To virtue and talents, madame Necker united the ardent piety of protestant women. "Her name," said Mr. Necker to Lewis XVI., (perhaps the only person at court capable of discerning her merit) "her name is known, and often invoked, in the most dreary abode of suffering humanity." It is not surprising, therefore, that her name was unknown in a vicious court, and even become odious to the great. In 1778 she exhibited a manifest instance of sensibility; and proved, that she was the only person in France that could regard with compassion the sufferings of a principal nobleman, who had been confined for twenty-eight years in the castle of Ham in Picardy. The count de Lautrec, a captain of dragoons, hardly retained the human form, was almost naked in his dungeon, accompanied only by rats, wearing a prodigious long beard, which had united with the hair of his head, and almost devoured by vermin. She ameliorated the situation of his person, and induced the king to augment his allowance.

Her solicitude for the success of her husband increased in proportion to the animosity of the two parties. She was said to be author of a

pamphlet, of which the king possessed a copy, wherein she answers the accusations and complaints exhibited against him; and particularly addresses herself to the author of *M. Turgot's Letter to Mr. Necker.*

" It is not without difficulty, sir, that I have been able to procure a copy of your letter to Mr. Necker. Far distant from the capital, it would have been almost impossible for me to have succeeded, if you had not taken the precaution to distribute them in the provinces. I had heard it spoken of as a libel, and I perceive that I am not mistaken.

" Perfectly persuaded that M. Turgot is incapable of publishing, or even of imagining, such nonsense, it is not to him that I address myself; but to you, M. Anonymous.

" Mr. Necker has treated with contempt the invectives which you have so liberally bestowed on him. The police have committed only two of the distributors of your long epistle to the *Fort Evéque.* As to yourself, I believe your place will be at Charenton. Do not imagine that they will do you the honour to send you to the Bastille.

" I am inclined to believe, that you are one of the discarded receivers; and I am afraid, that, having neglected to balance every day, you will find some *deficit* in your accounts, which

will prevent you from receiving the reimbursement of your employment.

" It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that you advise a minister of the finances to leave to his clerks the management of the accounts and registers, which you look upon as only the rudiments of the profession.

" You say that Mr. Necker ' has a strange aversion to the magistrates.' Why do you wish to include them in your quarrel? Perhaps you suppose that you may soon have occasion for their indulgence; but let me advise you, if you fall into their hands, not to believe they will be more favourable to you for having so warmly espoused their party, or that they will screen you from the punishment you may have deserved. What have magistrates to do with financiers, if it be not to punish them for their malversation?

" ' He cannot love the monarchy,' you say, ' because he is a banker, and connected with bankers.' This is your principle. Messrs. Beaujon and de Laborde have been bankers; ask them if that title made them hate the monarchy.

" These bankers, whom you so much despise, have nevertheless advanced their money for the equipment of above three hundred ships, which have, during the whole year, kept our enemies

in continual alarm. They have received no interest for this money:—Would you have done as much? You say they are navy-contractors, and not bankers; but there is not one of these contractors who is not a banker; and if I had money to put out, I should think it quite as safe with them as with you.

"Do not you imagine that these contractors, or bankers, whichever you please to call them, who by their signatures make themselves respected from one end of the earth to the other, are as good as a farmer-general or a receiver? They are honest people, who do not despise the persons they employ, and make quite as good a use of their riches as financiers of your description.

"Without endeavouring to examine into the birth of Mr. Necker, and without prying into the causes of his fortune, I know that he was charged at the court of France with the affairs of his republic; that, consequently, he possessed a very respectable character, which gave him access to many persons to whom you could with great difficulty have procured admission. You are ignorant, without doubt, that, in the republic of Geneva, the son of a magistrate remains unknown in the crowd, unless, by his personal merit, he can obtain distinction, and that neither nobility nor riches can procure him

rank or prerogative sufficient to advance him to public employments; that critics are there particularly forbidden; that employments are not lucrative; that having nothing to excite cupidity, they can only tempt noble minds, by the importance which is attached to them. Examine yourself, and reflect what you would be in such a republic.

"Let us come to the suppressions which you take so much to heart. You say, that Mr. Necker found his plans in the port-folios of his predecessors; you say, that you are very far from thinking, that princes and considerable men would have wished to find obstacles to reforms that were likely to promote the comfort of the state; and you exclaim against these reforms, because you pretend that they have been made without their co-operation. But who has told you so? Ought you to have been called when the minister or the king concerted with them on the subject?

"Why do you wish that our august queen should not likewise voluntarily contribute to relieve the burdens of the state, in whom we have constantly observed so many acts of beneficence? What matters it to her from whom she receives her money? According to your representation, the suppression of her treasurer may be attended with very dangerous consequences. Suffer her

to imitate her honoured mother; and do not suppose that your reflexions can disturb her happiness with her august husband.

" I sincerely believe that the reduction of the immense profits of farmers-general is not satisfactory to them; but I am well persuaded that Mr. Necker has not reckoned on their approbation.

" And what moment do you take to assert such nonsense? The moment in which the clergy are granting a gratuitous gift to the king, more considerable than any that have been hitherto required of them; the moment in which the loan had been filled up as soon as opened; which proves, that they do not believe in the ruin of his credit. Are you of opinion, that the hospitals should be possessed of lands rendering at most three *per cent*, which they acquire with money they get from the sinking funds at ten *per cent*, for every age indiscriminately? This must lead them on to bankruptcy, like that of Toulouse, twenty-five years ago, which was ruined by an attempt to rebuild it.

" Instead of inventing every kind of abuse against madame Necker, why do not you admire her, with the public, and even with the clergy, who contribute to her good works? Why do you not admire the pains she takes for the com-

fort of the sick poor, and the attentions they receive from her in the new hospitals established by our beneficent monarch, who extends his paternal cares to those asylums, which, having only one person in a bed, cost less than superb palaces, where we often see the dead confounded with the dying?

"And what inconvenience do you find in protestants being permitted to enjoy a civil consistence? I do not mean granting them the public exercise of their religion, although the Jews are allowed synagogues; but by suffering them to live peaceably, and endeavouring to convince them, by virtue and persuasion, of the errors in which they have had the misfortune to be born; in fine, to give their union the same civil consistence as the catholics are allowed in protestant countries.

"How could you have ventured to go so far respecting M. de Maurepas? Tremble lest the tender and sincere heart of our young monarch, whose choice you insult, should find some one to make him sensible of the indecency with which you treat that minister, who, from the time of his majesty's accession to the throne, he has justly honoured with his confidence."

Mr. Necker partook of the generous sentiments of his wife. Perceiving some probability of quitting his employment, he was not willing

to retire without having performed an act of charity towards the miserable sufferers in the hospitals. By an edict of the king, of the 11th of May, it was resolved, that the beds thenceforward should contain no more than one sick person. He had before introduced a system of amelioration in favour of the unfortunate; he had extended his views to the remotest recesses of prisons, and shown his compassion towards criminals condemned to afflictive penalties. He wished that the prince, after having ordained the chastisement, should preserve pity at the bottom of his heart: the egotists, who looked upon criminals as strangers to human-nature, and who imagined that they might still be tormented in the name of justice, he termed *savage men*: and he carried his attention so far, as to endeavour to concede indemnities to citizens accused of criminal matters, and proved innocent. A similar law was practised at Geneva.

But these sentiments of humanity, the zeal of madame Necker, and her justificatory publication, instead of softening her enemies, seemed but to revive their resentment against him. The most opposite parties united to accomplish more completely his destruction.

CHAP. XXI.

Of England at the Epoch of the precursory Signs of the Fall of Mr. Necker—Opinions in the English House of Commons on his Administration—His Enemies in France produce Debates in order to injure him, which they themselves cause to be printed in the London Newspapers.

IT is curious to hear the English on Mr. Necker's administration at this conjuncture. The opinion of Mr. Burke, one of the ablest orators of the opposition, caused a great sensation in France, particularly as we were at war with England, and as Mr. Burke was no friend to us.

"By economy," said Mr. Burke, "Lewis XVI. has found sufficient resources to sustain the war. In the two first years of it, he has laid no burden whatever on his people. The third year is arrived; still no talk of imposts; and I believe, that even those which are common in time of war have not been laid on. I conceive, that, in the end, France must have recourse to imposts; but those three years saved will extend their benign influence through a whole age. The French people feel the

happiness of having an economical master and economical ministers; economy has induced that monarch rather to retrench his own splendor than the subsistence of his people. In the suppression of a great number of places he has found a resource to continue the war, without adding to his expences. He has despoiled himself of the magnificence and purple of royalty; but he has established a navy; he has reduced the number of his household servants, but he has augmented the number of his sailors; he has given France such a navy as she never before possessed, and which will immortalise his reign; and he has established it without laying on a penny of imposts. The people, under his reign, are great, glorious, and formidable; they do not groan under the burden of expences to which our nation must submit, to acquire greatness, and inspire fear. This is true glory; this is a reign which must raise the name of Lewis XVI. above the boasted reign of Henry IV. Lewis XVI., like a patriot king, has exhibited great firmness in protecting Mr. Necker, a foreigner, without support and without connexion at court, alone indebted for his elevation to merit and the discernment of his sovereign, who has been able to discover and appreciate his talents. Here is a good example to follow; and, if we wish to conquer France,

it is with her own weapons that we must attack her here; it is with economy and reformation."

Mr. Necker's enemies, seeing what effect the opinions of Mr. Burke produced in France, opposed them in the violent ministerial papers by contrary sentiments.

"We are not surprised," said they, "that the English opposition are so loud in the praise of Mr. Necker. This praise is but an indirect insult, the sole end of which is to offend the ministers of that country. We find in it nothing but an envious comparison. The opposition say not a word about the multiplied violations of good faith, which signalise Mr. Necker's administration. They do not tell us that the honest French minister, after having obtained from the king, his master, the suppression of a great number of offices, by promising reimbursements in ready money, has easily effected the suppressions, but without any reimbursement, notwithstanding the faith of a solemn edict published by himself.

"They do not tell us, that the humane Mr. Necker has forced different officers of finance to lend, under pain of destitution, twenty-seven millions to the state, at five per cent interest; that he has forced the hospitals to sell their lands, and to lend the produce to the public; that he has laid an annual and vexatious impo-

sition on all the tenants of domains and forests; that he has augmented the poll-tax and land-tax, without the sanction of the law; that the wise and skilful Mr. Necker has sold every branch of the revenue, during eight years, for that of six years; that he has, with the same wisdom and foresight, anticipated the free revenue of the state, at least for more than ten months, with the assistance of bankers and financiers, of different denominations. They do not tell us, that he has assisted the most infamous lottery, in which the king pays a hundred livres with two livres ten sols; nor that they draw it every fifteen days at Paris, for the more direct ruin of the manners and substance of the people. All these things, and several others, which have marked with infamy the administration of Mr. Necker, have been passed over in silence by the orators of the English opposition. We know their motives; but, in observing ministers silent on the subject, it was to us a great object of surprise, till we discovered by what means the great man was attached to our interests; however, we ought not in this instance to discover these curious and secret particulars, for fear of injuring our last and most faithful ally on the continent.

"Mr. Necker's economy of supplies is the true cause of the very steady nullity of the ef-

forts of the French in the war. It is what prevented them from sending money to the Americans. It is to this economy that we are indebted for the revolt of Washington's army, and the number of mistakes made in the councils and by the arms of France since the commencement of the war. Suffer then the English opposition and administration to unite in praise of Mr. Necker, as long as France will believe him, by our united testimony, an honest, skilful, and virtuous man; suffer France to forget, that this man has made his fortune by ruining the India Company, whose interest he pretended to promote. Let them remain blind to his arrogance, his deceptions, and his impositions of every kind; and let them advance, in derision of truth, that Mr. Necker is not an empiric. All this he deserves from us; for, in fact, Mr. Necker is our best friend.

"May he, then, long continue to disgrace and degrade the councils of our enemies, and to blunt the points of their hostile darts when employed against our country!"

CHAP. XXII.

Representation of the Increase and Multiplication of the Oppositions against the Administration of Mr. Necker.—The Finance, the Administration, the Parliaments, the superior Clergy, and the high Nobility, oppose his Measures.

WE are now come to the time of the courageous resistance of the director of the finances against the *régime* of the monarchy. We are arrived at the last period of the contests between liberty and despotism. Cromot and Bourboulon, directors of the finances of Monsieur and the count d'Artois, redoubled their activity against Mr. Necker. M. de Maurepas no longer deprives himself of a *bon mot*. M. de Vergennes, an inveterate and secret enemy of the principles and plans of the Genevese minister, is preparing for him, in silence, the decisive blow; but he is not too hasty with it; he never mentions it; and it was because he had not the manners of a passionate man, like M. de Maurepas, that Lewis XVI. was obliged to address himself to him, to obtain an opinion of the director-general.

Mr. Necker, on his part, was too proud, too

much above intrigue, and too well persuaded of the wisdom and justice of his projects, to abandon them. The fury of his enemies, which redoubled instead of abated, animated his courage, and heightened his ambition; so that now he solicited Lewis XVI. to make him minister of state, in order to attain to the hierarchy of power, to crush the murmurs and complaints of the disaffected to his administration, and to operate with more energy and *éclat*. He answered by new suppressions, the pamphlets and lampoons which the courtiers published against him; but M. de Maurepas, although often obliged to support him in the end, expressed himself with great warmth. In this combat Mr. Necker exhibited considerable energy and talent; notwithstanding which, the strength of his party decreased in proportion as he multiplied the suppressions; and, similar to M. Turgot, he, in the end, had only a few individuals remaining in his party. The corporations and authorities manifested their dissatisfaction. They fomented factions against him, to keep pace with his suppressions, and permitted the most glaring insults against his administration. If he adopted a new measure of reformation, to increase his popularity, he met with new opposition to unite with the former. Each subversive operation created a fresh kind of discontent,

and so on, according to the multiplication of reforms in the department of the finances.

The nomination alone had set the friends of M. Turgot against him. Since the year 1777, Mr. Necker had been assailed by a shower of pamphlets from that party; so that his enemies consisted of the nobility he had abased, and even of his emulators in reforming the old institutions, who, like himself, were burning with the fervour of patriotism, and the ardent desire to promote the welfare of the state.

The suppression of the intendants of the finances, the farmers-general, and the different treasurers, together with the reduction of the forty-eight receivers, excited against him the resentment of the high and low finances. All this party, with the exception of several who were dependants, were inveterate against him.

The suppression of the receivers of the domains, and the revolution in the lottery administration, and in the farm leases; the reduction of the power of the intendants, and the abolition of the commercial ones; had, in 1777, stirred up against him the high and low administration.

The extension of the twentieths, by a single letter, in the same year, occasioned the complaints of the magistrates, who were proprietaries; the examination of alienated domains dis-

pleased a crowd of ancient favourites; while the suppression of reversions, and the reduction or abolition of employments, alienated from him courtiers, and drew on him the ridicule of the great, so strange to the director.

His abuse of the parliaments irritated all the sovereign courts. "What is this adventurer," said Duprémesnil, with great brutality, in his parliamentary debates, "What is this mountebank, who dares to challenge the patriotism of the French magistracy, who dares to imagine them lukewarm in their civil affections, and denounce them to a young king?"

His publication of the *Compte rendu*, his request to be made counsellor of state, and the remarks on his administration, presented to the king by M. de Vergennes, at length alienated his friends in the administration; so that Mr. Necker had lost, in the month of May, 1781, every support of the ministers. At that time he was generally hated by all the agents of the ancient *régime*, and by all their partisans. he might say with M. Turgot, in a similar situation, that nearly every party was armed against him.

Nevertheless, he had the partisans at court, which we have already mentioned.

Among the clergy, the incredulous and fanatic minority were devoted to him.

In the parliaments, some silent ma[illegible] perceived his good intentions.

In the high finance, several magist[illegible] accepted employments, and were sil[illegible] others continued their sarcasms with in[illegible] fury. Mr. Necker invoked *public opinion* [illegible] these circumstances. It is time to come to this opinion, and examine if the true *public* [illegible] belonged to his party.

CHAP. XXIII.

History of public Opinion, cited on every Occasion by Mr. Necker and his Partisans—It was established in the Opposition, and formed it—It was the destructive Power of the ancient Monarchical Institutions—It mis-led the Nation.—Doctrine of Mr. Necker on that Subject.

IT was by the assistance of these two words, *public opinion*, and by their magical virtue, that Mr. Necker had dissolved all the parties of his department, and even shook those of the edifice of the monarchy, with which they were connected; and no one thought it his business to ask him in which body of the monarchy resided this formidable opinion, which he called to his relief, and which he supposed still existed, when he lost the support of the corporations and institutions.

Was it, therefore, in the royal family, and in the princes of the blood? The prince of Condé appeared tolerant respecting it, and the family of Orléans seemed favourable to Mr. Necker; but the rest employed all their credit to ruin him, on account of the nature of his administration.

Was it among the clergy? [illegible] looked upon him as a very dange[illegible] strator.

Was it even in philosophy, whi[illegible] the supreme regulator of opinion? The eco[illegible] mists, except Dupont, and some other individuals, and the atheistical party of Condorcet, refused him their applause, and even [illegible] against him.

Was it among the nobility? in the parliaments? in the administration? [illegible] and bodies called him the scourge of the [illegible] He was at variance with the state, and its opinions.

Mr. Necker had, notwithstanding, some active, powerful, and audacious societies, of which I have already spoken; they were observed to take his part with warmth, and inflame themselves in his support, because, at all events, this sort of opinion was the desire and the doctrine of the discontented and formidable opposition; for, in every empire, it influences the minds, character, and ideas of the people, and particularly developes itself where the state is neither imposing by its manner or power. France had been the victim of it under every weak and courteous monarch.

Mr. Necker, in Italy, would have termed jansenism *public opinion*.

In Spain, the *reforming philosophic spirit* would have obtained that name.

In England, it would have been the opposition. In Russia, the party of Moscow. In Poland, the patriotic party; and in Austria, the party of Joseph II. at the death of the regent Maria Theresa.

In France, Mr Necker called *public opinion* the domineering spirit of philosophy, the audacity of disaffected and systematic men, and the reign of innovation. The supposition alone of this *opinion* being *public*, was a mortal blow to the hierarchy and constitution of the state: and it is in this point of view that the most fanatic partisans of absolute authority talked of conducting him to the Bastille, and of naming a commission. Let us hear how Mr. Necker, in his writings, spoke of *public opinion*, as the first who adopted the term in the practical as well as the theoretical part of the administration.

"It is necessary," says he, "to have a support against the vacillations of ministers; and this important support can only be acquired by the progress of understanding, and the *elastic force* of *public opinion*. The virtues are more than ever at a loss for a public theatre, and it becomes essential that *public opinion* should animate the actors; this *opinion* must therefore be

supported, it must be enlightened, it must be called to the aid of ideas, which are requisite for the happiness of mankind."

Mr. Necker wished the administration of the finances to be *the result of a series of reflection*. In the anterior administrations he could discover, that the ministers only lived in the state as if they were not present; that they sojourned therein as if they were only in a place of pomp and fortune; and that they carried out of office nothing more than the list of ungrateful and disaffected men whom they had promoted. These administrators were, for the greatest part, without opinions applicable to their employments, and were governed by a number of clerks invested with their confidence.

His observations herein were just; but it was with such ministers that the state and its power had been preserved in its integrity, until Mr. Necker came to the administration; while he destroyed the authority which he had found pure and inviolate.

"The spirit of society, the desire of respect and flattery," says he again, "have erected a tribunal in France, where all men that have become conspicuous are obliged to appear: there *public opinion, as from the summit of a throne, distributes prizes and crowns, and establishes or destroys reputation.*

"When, under Lewis XIV., repose was established, the empire of public opinion was but feeble. The great splendor which surrounded his throne had habituated the nation to seek and acknowledge no other criterion than the approbation of so great a king. Notwithstanding, the nation was taught what it ought to admire; distinguished men, of every description, were accustomed to the delicate recompence of approbation and applause.

"Such oppositions must of course prepare the empire of opinion; nevertheless, its progress was still retarded by the indifference and frivolity which characterise the genius of the times, by the boldness of its manners, and by the clashing of interest and fortune, which alone engage our attention.

"But since that epoch, the power of public opinion, favoured by divers circumstances, has gradually increased, and at this day it will be difficult to destroy it; it reigns in every mind; princes themselves respect it; some by their ambition to obtain public favour, and others, more untractable, by the ascendency of those who surround them *.

* Abuses are the same in Prussia and Austria, or perhaps greater. Examine how Mr. Necker's public opinion is spoken of by the administration of those countries.

"This preponderance of public opinion is infinitely more weak in other countries, and under different governments. People of a bolage fix their attention on the princes, rewards and punishments; republicans rely on public credit ..... Nations enervated by a meridional climate, and buried in sensual enjoyments, would not bear the yoke of public opinion. Hence the generality of foreigners can scarcely form an idea of the authority which public opinion exercises in France; they are at a loss to conceive what this invisible power can be, that, without treasury, without guards, and without armies, gives laws to the city, to the court, and even to kings *. Must not that power be formidable, which can render men contemptible even on the steps of the throne; and which, on the contrary, can support them in exile and disgrace.

"Let us, therefore, learn to appreciate an authority so salutary! Let us rally, to defend it against those it oppresses, and who wish to destroy it. It is often the ascendency of public opinion, more than any other consideration, that prevents the abuse of power in France. It is this opinion, and the esteem in which it is held, that gives the nation a kind of influence,

* Yes, surely, when the minister of the finances is at the head of *public opinion*.

by confiding to it the power of recompensing with praise, or punishing with disdain: so that if ever this opinion became absolutely despised, if even it weakened itself, liberty, perhaps, would lose its principal support, and we should be in still greater want, both of the virtues of the sovereign and the moderation of his ministers. The minister of the finances ought to be particularly tenacious of public opinion. If he disdain it, he must be in danger; and the state, in a greater degree, must suffer from his temerity."

The fall of Mr. Necker, and perhaps that of ancient France, had no other immediate cause than the opinions we have mentioned above; and, as a proof that the true public opinion, quite opposite to the former, is the safeguard of empires, and the guarantee of the repose of nations, Mr. Necker's public opinion abandoned him, and, in 1791, he at length found himself deceived. At that time a coalition of opposite decisions were formed in the very heart of the national assembly, and in the interior of France. Let us hear what Mr. Necker himself says hereon: we have already seen how much he had cherished, flattered, and aggrandised this opinion; hear how it terminates.

"An unhappy victim," said he, "to a series of wrongs, of which history affords no example,

I experienced all the weight of bitter [illegible] and, nevertheless, I refrained from [illegible] my painful sentiments: comparing [illegible] with the ungrateful indifference of [illegible] assembly, I found, in total silence, [illegible] lity that accorded with my disdain[illegible] in fine, I scarcely know why public [illegible] longer appears to me as it once did. [illegible] spect which I had religiously p[illegible] weakened, since I have seen it made subservient to the artifices of the wicked, since I have seen it tremble before men that it would formerly have cited to the bar of its tribunal, to devote them to infamy, and to stamp them with the seal of its reprobation."

CHAP. XXIV.

M. de Vergennes' Report to the King of the Principles and Administrative Motives of Mr. Necker—His Character, according to the Principles of M. de Vergennes—Comparison between him and M. Turgot—Considerations on his public Opinion.

M. De Vergennes was Mr. Necker's most dangerous enemy, because he was the most reserved, and the most zealous partisan of despotism in the council. Government had employed him to effect a revolution in Sweden for the increase of the royal authority. Become minister for foreign affairs, he had had the courage, in council, to head the party against the return of parliament, and had disputed it against M. de Maurepas, and a great majority. He was now employed in suppressing the revolted Genevese patriots, and secretly influenced the mind of Lewis XVI. against the director-general; of whom he speaks in these terms:

"Sire, Your majesty has done me the honour to request my advice, in writing, on the present situation of the director of our finances.

"Mr. Necker's being honoured in the eyes of the public with an eminent employment, and appearing to enjoy your majesty's confidence, is

sufficient, on every occasion, to make me signify my disapprobation of the writings that are daily multiplied against him, and in which, as I am told, his religion, his birth, his wife, and the epoch and progress of their fortune, are every instant exposed to public derision or inspection. From these scandalous disputes must arise the very great inconvenience of an innovation fatal to the welfare of your majesty's service; I mean to say, the custom of abandoning the administration and its authority to the pasquinades and examinations of the malignity or curiosity of the public. Your majesty is able to judge of the evident effect of such a number of writings, since you have had the goodness to show me, several times, that your majesty was employed in reading them.

" It is very certain, sire, that Mr. Necker, becoming the object of these debates, has placed himself in a situation that must essentially expose your majesty's interests. France is a monarchy, in which authority is absolute. The state is a happy composition of the person of the king, his family, the clergy, and the great men of the kingdom. Sovereign courts are honoured with the confidence and authority of the prince, for the administration of justice to his subjects. He confides to illustrious families in the magistracy, the care of

presiding in the courts of justice, and in the offices of the superior administration. It is from these families, distinguished by long services, that your majesty's ancestors have generally chosen persons, celebrated for their virtue and talents, to make them ministers of state; and history attests, that they have vied with each other, by an effect of singular emulation, to contribute to the glory and prosperity of this empire.

" Your majesty knows better than any other person, that the state is indebted to this constitution for the general preservation of authority, and for the wise administration of affairs, which a series of ages and long experience have brought to perfection, insuring our prosperity, and daily increasing its importance in every quarter of the globe.

" Nevertheless, at a time when your majesty is giving back to France that importance and splendor, of which it had been momentarily deprived by some events at the close of the last reign, at this happy time the minister of the finances adopts measures which tend to establish in the state and administration such forms as are repugnant to them. It is at this moment that he renders himself odious, suspicious, and ridiculous to the variety of enemies who have

undertaken to attack him. The mass of the French clergy are terrified at beholding their natural enemy honoured with your majesty's confidence, and placed at the head of the administration of the finances; and, notwithstanding Mr. Necker's solicitude to avoid contentions with the first order of the state, the elements of the two religions are too opposite to prevent inconveniences which, at this moment, diminish the respect which the bishops owe to your majesty; a respect of which your majesty is sure, but which should not be trifled with, on account of its preponderating influence.

" You must be convinced, sire, that a party has been formed at court against the operations of Mr. Necker, at the same time that the most distinguished families in the administration and magistracy do not conceal their repugnance or hatred. Many suppose themselves insulted; and your majesty cannot but perceive that the number of the dissatisfied, in that class, increases daily.

" Your majesty is best able to appreciate the principles of the council. It was not possible to observe in the person of Mr. Necker, at the commencement, any other prerogative than that of a simple director of the royal treasury, in a state of dependance. Such was your majesty's

intention, from a sense of what was due to the constitution of the state, and to prevent the oppositions which would have been raised against a different authority or a different denomination. Mr. Necker has worked himself up, by degrees, from this first situation; and now aspires to new favours, sufficient in their nature to terrify and incense that vast crowd of enemies, who find it their interest to continue against him their public debates, which your majesty is desirous of putting a stop to, and thereby prevent their ill effects.

" Your majesty has perceived, that Mr. Necker, in his perilous situation, adhered to his place with a tenacity that was not without measures or means. The opinion of M. de Maurepas, who wishes to keep him within the limits of his employment, the opinion of the mass of the clergy and the chief men of the kingdom, and the opinion of the sovereign courts, and all the respectable part of the high administration of the state, is not at all favourable to Mr. Necker. Thus situated, Mr. Necker relies on what he calls *public opinion*; and this opinion he finds in the innovating spirit of the times, in the society of men of letters and that of philosophers, who should be employed in the government if your majesty wishes entirely to overturn it. This opinion he also finds in the

eulogiums of a part of the English parliament, whose factions all unite to injure and depreciate this country. He finds this public opinion, in fine, in the ideas of reform and humanity, which Mr. Necker himself spreads abroad, and which he is continually enforcing; and persuades your subjects, that this beautiful kingdom can only become really grand and powerful by means of his own principles of reform.

"Your majesty has already made considerable sacrifices to the spirit of innovation that torments some men, and which should rather be repressed than encouraged. This innovating spirit augments Mr. Necker's desires and pretensions, in proportion as he feels himself honoured with new favours; and, at length, he is become dangerous and suspicious to the wise institutions of this monarchy. The administration of the kingdom, that grand work of the wisdom of your august ancestors, is now menaced by all the follies of the times and circumstances.

"Such, sire, is the nature of the public opinion which Mr. Necker has called to his assistance, and which becomes his defence. It is this opinion which he cherishes, enlightens, and directs with effect; since, by the nature of his operations, he is deprived of the support of the true public opinion of this monarchy, in which

alone Mr. Necker ought to have sought his natural dependance. With his talents, and actuated by the latter opinion, he might have rendered great services, without exposing the institutions of the monarchy to peril.

" Foresight being a quality very essential to persons whom your majesty may please to invest with authority, it becomes necessary daily to calculate the future effects of this opinion which Mr. Necker calls *public*; for, if the spirit and maxims of the first orders of the state cease to govern this favoured empire, if the *public opinion* of Mr. Necker should definitively prevail, if English and Genevese principles be introduced into our administration, your majesty must expect to see the state governed by that part of your subjects which now obey, and the part which now rules reduced to the former's servile situation; and, as every thing under our observation seems to facilitate the execution of this metamorphosis, I conceive that your majesty cannot remain an unconcerned spectator of such an event, or delay, amid the actual parties and disputes that are forming and in agitation, to sacrifice the *public opinion* of Mr. Necker to the opinion, principles, and wise and pacific administration of the orders and corporations, which, for ages past, have maintained the greatness and power of this empire.

Your majesty is again placed in the same situation as with M. Turgot, when you thought proper to hasten his retreat; and the same dangers and the same inconveniences are derived from the nature of their analogous systems."

CHAP. XXV.

Retreat of Mr. Necker—Critical Situation of that Minister—He solicits the King to admit him into the Council of State—Anxiety of the Prince—Refusal of M. de Maurepas—Mr. Necker's Retreat—At his Retreat Opposition ceases in the Government—The ancient Principles are again constituted therein.

THE clamours against Mr. Necker became every day more audacious and alarming among the nobles of the court and among the high administration. Pamphlets were augmented daily against him. In the best societies of the high finance, they talked of the necessity of bringing him to trial, of confining him, of banishing him, or commencing actions at law against him; it was even repeated in the writings by which they opposed all his operations. They reproached him with being connected with lord Stormont, embassador from the court of London, and with violently declaiming against the present war. They wickedly reported, that M. de Maurepas began to be on his guard against a nocturnal escape; and they asserted, that he had said: "We shall see, this time, if public opinion will triumph."

They were equally inflamed in the party of Mr. Necker. In this agitated state, he pretended, that he would retire and set out post for Geneva, if he was not made counsellor of state; and immediately it was reported in the capital, that M. de Maurepas was resolved to put in execution an ancient measure, that did not permit the administrators of the finances, who were foreigners, to be admitted into the council, without a particular order, signed by the king. The accusation of a criminal correspondence with England was invented and reported by M. de Sartines, who never denied it, protesting, that Mr. Necker was the agent of the court of London in France.

The French minister, at this conjuncture, attacked the views and plans of Mr. Necker in council, in presence of Lewis XVI. They pretended not to understand his ideas, which the king had the goodness to explain and develope. They examined his plans, rejecting some and ridiculing others. In this situation of affairs, Mr. Necker wrote a note to the king, renewing his request to be admitted into the council, in order to discuss his operations with the ministers. M. de Maurepas, who opposed it, answered, that this favour should be granted, if he would solemnly abjure the errors of Calvin.

The king appeared wavering, and in a state

of indecision. Confusion was established in the government, and he alone could terminate it. Fearing the consequences of dismissing a popular minister, who had spirited and ardent partisans in his favour; wishing not to offend M. de Maurepas, his prime-minister; tormented by the prophetic menaces of the director-general's enemies; he still caressed Mr. Necker, and testified an inclination to protect him. M. de Maurepas declared, that all the ministers (M. de Castries excepted) would give in their resignations, if his majesty should think proper to give them Mr. Necker for a colleague.

Mr. Necker, on his part, was resolved to retire, if he were not made minister of state. Aware of the king's weakness, the menaces spread against him were sufficient to prompt him to ask for the administration, in which the party of M. de Maurepas found their own danger. The friends of the two factions, keeping their eyes on the king, awaited with terror his determination; but Mr. Necker's note, requesting to be admitted to the council, had no effect upon the monarch.

Besides, the coffers were full, and a great deal of ready money was provided in advance. M. de Maurepas proved victorious with the king, and announced his success to the director-general in person. It was decided, that he

should not enter the council. And on the 19th of May, 1781, Mr. Necker sent the king his official resignation, together with the following note, written carelessly on a scrap of paper, three inches and a half long, and two and a half wide.

"The conversation which I have held with "M. de Maurepas, does not permit me any "longer to defer transmitting my resignation "into the hands of the king. I am stung to the "very soul. I flatter myself his majesty will "deign to preserve some remembrance of years "of successful, but painful, labour; and, above "all, of the unbounded zeal with which I de-"voted myself to his service.

"*May* 19. "NECKER."

It was much more effectual to write in this manner to the king, who was extremely mortified at it, than to address two epistles to him in the style of those of M. Turgot.

Mr. Necker received visits of condolence from the prince of Condé, at St. Ouen, and from the dukes of Orleans and Chartres.

CHAP. XXVI.

Mr. Necker's Sentiments on his Retreat—He reasons on its Causes, Accessories, and Effects.

MR. Necker's account of his retreat deserves a place in these Memoirs. This reforming minister, like every statesman, passed from the midst of grandeur to the ordinary class of mankind; but the most remarkable part of this circumstance was, that his act of resignation was the work of a man a stranger to the usual enjoyments of ministers, and anxious for the recompence which he expected from the success of his plans.

"I have quitted the administration," says Mr. Necker, "and have left supplies for a whole year. I have quitted it at a moment when the royal treasury possesses more ready money and useful effects than was ever known in the memory of man; and at a moment when public confidence, entirely re-animated, is raised to the highest degree.

"Under different circumstances they would have valued me more; but it is when we can be spared, and when we are no longer essen-

tially necessary, that they permit us to reflect a moment for ourselves. There is, nevertheless, a despicable idea, which may be easily discovered, in the folds of the human heart, that leads people to take advantage of a moment for retreat, when they can receive some gratification in the embarrassment of their successors. I should have been ashamed of such conduct; I have acted as a man who, having loved his situation from honest motives, cannot, on quitting it, separate his views for an instant from the public welfare."

He added, that if he could have foreseen how much he regretted his resignation, he would, perhaps, have supported and risked every thing to have retained his place, and have waited for the event; but he saw that the malevolence of his enemies, and the opposition of M. de Maurepas, were arrived at such a pitch, that these sacrifices could not have been of any long duration. He was indebted for his fortitude and principles, to his probity, and to the exaltation of his virtues, in a country where prostitution was at its height; and it was his intention, he said, by preserving them inviolate, to maintain his consequence, and avoid the fawning of statesmen, which, he conceived, led them to ruin and dishonour. He wished to teach the court, whose attention

was divided between the splendor of rank and the tinsel of titles, that there existed another kind of grandeur, that of virtue and character; but he thought there was only one favourable moment to give an example of it, after which his reputation would be blasted, and malignity would have sufficient leisure to abuse a man whose ruin was determined on.

Mr. Necker retired, therefore, to reserve himself for future opportunities.

"When a minister has triumphed over suspicion," said he; "when he enjoys esteem and approbation; and when his intentions are accredited; imagination and hope, those precious harbingers of the opinion of men, come in to his assistance; he meets every where with encouragement on his journey, and reaps continually the fruit of his virtues. Painful remembrance! it was at the time I supposed myself in the enjoyment of this confidence, that I was arrested in my career; it was when I hoped I had obtained public approbation, the darling object of my ambition, that the reins of administration have slipped from my hands. Impure breath of wickedness and envy, how terrible you appear! You cherish and protect those ministers who are abased or despised; or, rather, you abandon them to their reputation, and that is sufficient for you: but your victims must be

those who rely on their own sentiments, or whom public opinion has dared to elevate.

" Power vanishes, employments disappear, praise itself passes away; in a short time nothing remains of a great office, but images of sadness and melancholy; if, by a consciousness of honourable intentions, which must ever exalt an administrator in his own esteem, he has not provided in the bottom of his heart a happy, or at least a peaceable, retreat."

Mr. Necker, however, regretted having been interrupted in his career, and being prevented from putting into execution what he had conceived for the glory of the king and the service of the state. Some days after his retreat, while he was employed in classing his papers and memorandums, he cast his eyes on the parcels which contained his plans on the amelioration of the gabels, on the suppression of custom-houses, and on the extension of provincial administrations, and he could proceed no farther; by an involuntary motion he pushed away his writings, covered his face with his hands, and tears ran from his eyes, as abundantly as they did from those of M. Turgot, when he was informed of the re-establishment of the averages.

" At that time, nevertheless, I had not foreseen every thing," said Mr. Necker; " for

when, after painful victories gained over our own sensibility, to establish some better regulation, or to adopt some rules of administration, which we suppose salutary, we must be spectators of the abandonment of our principles..... Oh, that they could dive into the bottom of my thoughts, that some one, for an instant, might pity me! Shame on him, that could perceive, in the effusions of a feeling heart, the vexation or regret of disappointed ambition! They would then be convinced, whether my place was held for the base motives which have been attributed to me. Shut up in my cabinet, from the time of rising in the morning until the close of day, without personal interest, without enjoying the sweets of gratitude, or without seeking exterior splendor; if I was passionately fond of the situation I possessed, it was from motives that can never cause a blush; and, when my thoughts revert to times that are past, I still feel myself inspired by sentiments of the same nature. If they had attempted to attribute my request, to be admitted as a member of the council, into an emotion of vanity, or if they had succeeded therein, I should have no reason for reproaches; I conceived, that in the midst of all kinds of attacks, whether too bold or too diffident, this mark of confidence became absolutely necessary to a minister, who, at every instant, was in want

of advice. I had an idea, that the administrator of the finances, who is answerable on his honour to furnish supplies, ought, for the welfare of the state, to have been admitted to the deliberations on war or peace; and, I looked upon it as very important, that he should be able to join his reflexions to those of the other servants of the king. These, I protest, were the only motives by which I was actuated. A place in the council might, according to general calculations, flatter self-love; but, when we have been engaged with a different passion, when we have sought praise and glory, when we have obtained those triumphs which are peculiar to ourselves, we regard, with the most perfect tranquillity, the honours of which we partake. You, who proposed to me to change my religion, in order to remove the obstacles which you had raised, and were sure, at the same time, that I should not consent, (Maurepas,) what would you have thought I deserved after such an act of baseness? It were better for the vast administration of the finances, that this scruple had been made at the time it was first intrusted to me. It was not certain, that I was worthy of an exception to the general rule. Besides, the council of state, the only one in which I requested to be admitted, is simply a conference in presence of the king, where votes are not taken, where his

majesty alone decides, and where neither patent, nor even an oath, is required; but, supposing this oath to have been indispensable, was not five years of just and virtuous administration a sufficient one? And what new tie could they have on a person who had performed before he had promised?

"We are brought to despise the most noble sentiments, by giving them the name of exaltation: manœuvres of inconsiderable men, who, to preserve an honourable idea of their own importance, endeavour to give a gigantic air to every thing that surpasses them. The more skilful know how to use the weapons of ridicule, without reflecting on the evil for which they are answerable, if they weaken in the mind of kings the impression of honesty..... But the most dangerous exaltation is never that of the ideas, but solely of the mind; when a man acts carefully in the administration, when he pays attention to the most minute circumstances, when, at the same time that he provides for the future, he attends equally to the present, what in him would be termed exaltation applies necessarily to those movements of the soul which invigorate the ideas, whose elasticity ought never to be enfeebled or repressed..... Ideas of grandeur, which relate to politics, to the spirit of domination, and to the love of an-

thority, only require an inanimate and easy character; but those which are employed in promoting the happiness of mankind, in the establishment of order, and in the culture of honour and virtue, cannot be separated from a kind of ardour which nourishes and engenders them."

CHAP. XXVII.

Mr. Necker's Portrait, drawn by his Friends.

WE have observed, in every part of these Memoirs, in what manner the enemies of Mr. Necker have depicted that celebrated man; but we ought also to examine how he has been represented by the contrary party. M. Lavater, a man of genius, whose military persecution will reflect eternal disgrace on the directory of France, and that of Switzerland; a man skilful in physiognomy, and possessed of great wit and sentiment, has given us a character of Mr. Necker in the year 1789, which merits every kind of consideration. He has drawn this portrait at a conjuncture interesting both to history and to his art, at the very moment when that personage, to his observation, was the most striking phænomenon in nature.

Mr. Necker had been proscribed in France some days before by the friends of the ancient *régime*, who considered him as the principal mover of the revolution which he had constituted in the very bosom of the government. It was the second time that they obliged the weak Lewis XVI. to discharge him from the

ministry, as an enemy of the monarchy and its institutions.

Under these circumstances he arrived at Basle. Flying from the land he had revolutionised, leaving France at a crisis which was about to decide whether the monarchy would be forced to submit to the power of a revolution, or whether the revolution would be crushed, he there awaits the event. The danger which threatened the constituents had armed the people; love of liberty, and the force and courage of the revolutionists of 1789, were about to sanction the theories of Mr. Necker; the ancient monarchy was to be overturned; the principal supporters of its abuses were to be massacred; and the city of Basle beheld in its bosom, at the same time, both the discarded revolutionary minister, who waited for the defeat or victory of the ancient government, and the terrified and fugitive family of Polignac, who were describing the insurrections of the provinces which they had escaped from. It was at this moment (the 24th of July, 1789,) that madame de Stael invited the enlightened Lavater, then at Basle, to take a family dinner with her at the *Three-Kings* hotel. It was inviting the painter of portraits to draw the likenesses of the father and family.

"Although in some respects," says Lavater, "I had represented Mr. Necker's person to myself very different from what it was, his figure,

at the first aspect, answered my expectation; but, when observed closer, I was surprised at the difference of his countenance from all the portraits of him that I had ever seen. My physiognomical judgment of the whole was very soon decided.

" At a certain distance his entire countenance inspires a sentiment of veneration. Observing it close, we discover more amability. The construction of the solid parts of his head does not resemble the originally grand and characteristic forms of nature; it is not an absolute, singular, original product, a bold countenance, a *salto mortale*, like, for instance, in different degrees, those of Newton, Locke, Montesquieu, Thurlow, Chatham, Pitt, or even Voltaire, Rousseau, Johnson, &c.; but the whole has something singular, approaching to moral perfection, and indicative of tranquil wisdom and consummate prudence; his features, taken separately, express honesty, goodness, mildness, and nobleness of sentiment. He received me as Frenchmen generally do, with politeness, but yet with more dignity; that is to say, in a more grave and serious manner; and, when I say, like all Frenchmen, I say wrong, since I ought first to add, that I have observed few people of the world, and above all of the court, possessed of so much simplicity, and of so opposite a

description from the generality of Frenchmen; for which reason I, as well as all sensible men, must respect that nation a great deal more, inasmuch as it has been just, in judging so delicately of a person who possesses nothing of that cheerful countenance, that sparkling wit, or that kind of eloquence abounding in compliments of flattery, which are so natural to Frenchmen.

"Mr. Necker spoke little, particularly at first. He did not appear to me, although in one of the most important moments of his life, either sorrowful, dejected, absent, interiorly agitated, or in a state of uncertainty, fear, or still less of joy; he had, nevertheless, been the night before to meet his beloved wife and daughter, had received his recall from the king and the national assembly, and had returned his answer; notwithstanding which, we could observe no agitation, no signs of absence, nor any appearance of a mind absorbed in profound meditation. He preserved the gravity of a sage, and that without affectation, consequence, or trouble.

"His voice is extraordinarily sweet; and, as every thing about him is serious, mature, manly, and far removed from pedantry, his knowledge of the world is easily discovered; but the minister of state is very striking, every thing announces it in him, but without the least ostentation. If I had seen Mr. Necker, without

knowing him, I should never have taken him for a man of letters only, neither for a military man, artist, nor merchant; for even in this last state, he was already, in the soul, predestinated a minister; he appeared to be born for the direction of the finances. He listened with the complete tranquillity of a sage, who examines every thing, anticipates nothing, thinks deeply, and with an exactness that includes dates as well as facts, yet infinitely distant from minute curiosity. All his expressions were deliberate, but to the purpose; all his looks were attentive, although modest and discreet; all his answers were apposite, and nobly expressed, free from studied precision; and every part of his conversation was mature and accomplished.

" His forehead has something of a soft feminine; it has neither nodes, angles, nor wrinkles; it falls back, and resembles all foreheads of that description.

" In the eye-lids, which are not thick, nor very high, as also in the gentle sinking and colour of the eyes, there is an infinite expression of wisdom, full of nobleness and gravity, mixed with sweetness; and, although I do not find in them the sparkling fire of genius, I remark something of a mind superior to the interests of this world, and which is no stranger to that which is to come. The most sublime parts of

his religious opinions seem to derive their origin from the celestial regions. In his attentive, insinuating, and earnest look, we may distinguish his analytical talent; he is greater by creative force than by that of combination, comprehension, and acuteness: when he listens, nothing escapes him. His complexion is a pale yellow, very indicative of an experienced statesman, and very significant of an *even* and *peaceable* character.

" His mouth, of which the middle line is extremely characteristic, and well-formed, without stiffness, exhibits the graces of the most unaffected good-nature, inspiring not only esteem, but personal attachment.

" His chin is very long and fleshy, but without any indication of meanness or sensuality: its drawing backwards is strikingly harmonious with the forehead, and gives to his physiognomy, which does not want animation, that degree of calmness necessary to great calculators.

" The nose has no particular form; it is not large, nor thin, nor angular, nor very pointed, nor flat. It has, however, a very trifling pleasing inclination, which consolidates, to a discerning eye, the character of the whole; that is to say, uniformity and dignity; for I have found in him no want of harmony, nor any defect in his looks.

" It appears to me, that this man is particularly great and uniform; since, by self-instruction, he has done as much as nature would permit.

" I expressed my surprise to his wife, who is of a tall form, delicate complexion, and much distinguished by her writings and prudence, that her husband should be so tranquil at so important a moment. The ingenuity of her answer struck me: 'He is not so tranquil as you suppose; if he were, he would have spoken more during our repast.' 'If you do not call that tranquillity,' replied I, 'what must be his serenity in general?'

" At table he was attentive to all, doing the honours of it with dignity, ease, and obligingness. Strangers, who carried their curiosity even to indiscretion, did not alter his temper. No one could perceive the smile of vanity which is pleased with itself, or any appearance of turgid self sufficiency; he possesses no mortifying pride, nor any of that obduracy which is almost necessary to ministers of state.

" Every one about him was comfortable; he exhibits none of those affected airs and accents which close the mouth and repress the emotions of confidence; on the contrary, he was affable, free, full of esteem for his wife, and of visible tenderness for his daughter, the sensible and

accomplished madame de Stael. The politeness with which he received persons, who came with very opposite views, was neither flattering nor humiliating, familiar nor formal.

" French, English, Swiss, Messrs. de Fumingue, de Basle, de Sala, Decker, Haas, and his daughter, all were received with grace and nobleness. His peaceful presence silenced the importunate, and excited wise ideas. I believe it would be impossible to act wrong within his atmosphere.

" He mentioned not a word of himself, of his situation, of France, of his friends, or of his enemies. His accomplished daughter, in spite of me, brought on a conversation on physiognomy; what he said thereon showed no knowledge of anatomy or drawing, but it proved him a competent, instructive, and consummate judge of mankind. In short, if I have ever seen a politician endowed with excellent talents, it is this man, whom destiny has honoured with so many friends and so many enemies. To have a just idea of him, we must be witnesses of the respect and esteem that those who live in his neighbourhood entertain for him, and the freedom with which they speak in his presence; we must witness the love of his servants, carried almost to adoration; we must behold him in the bosom of his family.

"The French nation may boast of possessing the most exquisite taste for discovering the true greatness of man, and to esteem it according to its value: that people, who have learned to despise all prejudices of birth, and all prepossession foreign to merit, have distinguished him by an unheard-of confidence; and, abandoning themselves entirely to the ascendancy of virtue, write in golden letters on their cockades, *Long live the King, Necker, and the Nation!*"

CHAP. XXVIII.

Portrait of Mr. Necker by his Enemies, the Partisans of the ancient System of the Monarchy.

"MR. Necker despises our laws, our forms, our customs, and the distinctions of rank. Having no knowledge of the finances, such as he found them established, he levels every thing according to the confined science of banking, and according to the petty administration of Geneva. He expresses an invincible dislike to all discussion, because he has a very great interest in avoiding it. He desired, at first, to give no public audience; and, like the pagan divinities, to have no other sensible organs than the subalterns who are devoted to him. This trick of self-love could not succeed in an enlightened, frank, and polite nation. His proceeding was looked upon as an insult; and this mysterious exhibition occasioned complaints and suspicions.

" He was obliged to show himself; but his appearances were rare and rapid. He gives audience every month: What an air! what a look! what reserve! He appears as if the na-

tion were at war with him, and that he ought to suspect every one. You might imagine that people speak to him in a language he does not understand, for his answers are varied and differently combined, as if he were afraid of being mistaken. 'We shall see.... I shall see.... we must see .... I will make them give me an account .... See M. Hamelin .... Speak to M. d'Ailly.' Then a half bow is a signal for your departure.—Is this the representative of the prince?"

Mr. Necker, since that time, has drawn an analogous portrait of the minister of the roll of benefices.

CHAP. XXIX.

Character of Mr. Necker by the Author of these Memoirs, and a Sketch of his Principles and Administration.—Outrages of the Royalists of the ancient Government, and of the Republican Democrats, against him.—These two Sorts of Enemies are not the natural Judges of that Minister—They will not attract the Attention of Posterity.—Mr. Necker, from the Beginning of his Administration, in Opposition to all the Governments that were introduced into France.—His secret Projects on the Restoration of the Kingdom.

WE find that Mr. Necker has been depicted in many different and opposite ways. My business, therefore, in this situation, is, like that of a magistrate obliged to judge a celebrated man, who is warmly defended by his friends, and lashed without pity by implacable enemies—the latter even divided into several opposite parties.

Mr. Necker is, in the first place, scandalised with the utmost fury by the royalists of the ancient *régime*. Their likenesses of him are nothing more than disgusting caricatures. It is not on productions of such a nature that history will found her opinions on the character

of a personage, whose views and operations posterity will be anxious to examine.

Secondly, he is accused and calumniated by the first jacobins of 1789, or the constituents, in whose hands he abandoned the nation he had revolutionised. The persecutions of that party have been since continued by a long train of revolutionary families, who at first were united in raising his influence in the government, and afterwards successively elevated themselves. Those different factions, known by the names of *girondists*, *jacobins*, *montagnards*, and *cordeliers*, have carried their hatred against him so far, as to deprive him of his property in France. He has been obliged to defend, against all these classes of revolutionary Frenchmen, his fame, his projects, and even his probity and intentions. His turbulent life has therefore been nothing more than a series of opposition, which eleven years of revolution have not yet appeased; and is a memorable instance of the fatal consequences of placing the spirit of restless and reforming philosophy at the helm of administration.

Mr. Necker declared war against the ancient abuses, and against the administrative institutions of ancient France in 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, and 1781; and he braved the clamours, and despised the observations, at that epoch,

which wisely pointed out to him the danger of a dissolution. He declared war against the essential institutions of the monarchy in 1788 and 1789; and at that time we observe in him something more than contempt for the prophecies which have been since accomplished. He continued the execution of his plans; but, from the 14th of July, he argues against his own work, against the constituent national assembly, *whose name he would exhibit on a gibbet**.

Since his retirement, we find him in a state of eternal discord with the revolutions of 1790, 1791, 1792, and 1793, against whom his publications increase; and they are of such a nature as discover their author to be in perpetual hostility with the revolution, as well as with the counter-revolution, with the new, as well as with the old government; or we might better describe it by dividing his writings into two classes. Till the 14th of July they assist the revolution; they put it together like a machine, and set it in motion: after that period, they endeavour to stop it. His writings of the first epoch set on foot a grand subversion; those of the second seem to blush for the former, and

* I will erect a gibbet, to which the national assembly shall remain attached till the end of time, with this label: FOR THE CRIME OF INGRATITUDE.—*(Necker on his Administration,* page 483.)

tend, like all the productions of writers on the same subject, to confuse as to the causes, as if enlightened posterity could be deceived in the true authors of the revolution.

We shall not introduce the accusation of the first class of Mr. Necker's enemies. The partisans of the military government, which he destroyed in 1789, are all furious and unjust. Neither shall we mention the opinions of the second class, the *jacobins*, the *girondists*, and the *montagnards*. Each of these violent parties must be regarded by posterity as very incapable of equitable sentiments.

As to the opinions and descriptions of his character by impartial writers and common observers, history will not disdain to examine them; but they will be influenced by the nature of anterior events. In this respect, the situation of a contemporary writer is very delicate: for the royalists of the military government, and the supporters of the revolution, are equally incensed at a natural, true, and impartial portrait of that great personage. Each of them would wish to find him despicable, and treated according to their manner. Neither of them would have him spoken of with respect, because they have all pre-judged him in their writings, or mal-treated him by facts, with shameful and revolting injustice.

Mr. Necker himself is not exempt from blameable resentment towards the different classes of Frenchmen; and since he has taken the liberty to examine, judge, describe, provoke, and answer them, the historian is obliged to follow him in the variety and continuity of his debates. He is obliged to put in the scale the views and reasons of the opposite parties, which is a work of no inconsiderable importance, considering that Mr. Necker has disputed with uninterrupted constancy, that he has created, biassed, and assailed those different factions, from the conclusion of the reign of Lewis XV. even to the commencement of the nineteenth century, with so much perseverance, that even when he was quite unemployed in the government, he has never ceased by his writings to occupy the attention both of the administration and the republic of letters.

Educated in a republic, which is in an actual state of contention or revolution, Mr. Necker, like all other writers belonging to that republican colony, has continually declared, that every species of warfare was justifiable, when considered as favourable to reformation or to an intolerant democracy; but still imprudent in the execution; and tending, if established in a great state, to overturn, from beginning to end, all kinds of order, whether well or ill devised.

Mr. Necker, for once, agrees with the views of one of our governments;—and such again is the singular destiny of that celebrated man, that his actions, so deserving in this respect of public gratitude, are unknown to the world.

Every one must remember the time, without doubt, when scaffolds were erected, in the second year, against the royalists, the revolutionists, and the moderate party. Mr. Necker is the author of the first discourses that proposed calm and moderate measures to the convention, a few days after the 10th of Thermidor (28 July). We are also ignorant, on another side, of his conduct and solicitude when the farmers-general were murdered, and how afflicting that circumstance was to him, who, in 1781, had considered them as scourges.

It was said, that he had been the instrument of England for the devastation of France; but there never was a more atrocious falsity. Mr. Necker, observing that the abuses were increased by the impotence of the reign of Lewis XV., undoubtedly forgot that his duty was limited to the correction of them, and to the redress of grievances. He forgot that France, by the very nature of her institutions, was still the first power of Europe. Nevertheless, he attempted to accomplish his plans of reform by a revolution favourable to his wishes, and so

long concealed it, that his observers and enemies might easily be deceived in his intentions. They were ignorant that he wished to introduce a constitution similar to that of England, and they asserted that he was bribed by that country. That England should caress a minister of the finances of France in whom they saw so great a share of policy, morals, and religious opinions, and, above all, inculcating a doctrine subversive of our finances, is not surprising, and there is nothing in it but what is very probable and very natural; for, in order to deceive our connexions with the court of Vienna, and to destroy the influence of the queen, that country was doing every thing to revolutionise us herself; but that Mr. Necker should betray the king, and that he should have been the accomplice of the British minister's crimes, is what that great man's virtues could never suffer him to suggest, and what I, who have a much better knowledge of him than those who are loud in his abuse, can venture, and am impelled by duty, to contradict.

The plan of giving liberty to France, upon the same principles as had been adopted in England, proceeded from concern for the public welfare, which mis-led him as to the means, and from a desire of obtaining a great name, which for some time had engaged his attention,

His passion for fame was so great, that he was the emulator, to say nothing more, of Turgot, who had the same object in view. A stranger to the passions of the generality of our ministers, possessing neither their pusillanimity, their love of sordid gain, their prejudices, their habitual gallantry, nor their attachment to ancient customs; esteeming the British constitution, which they detested; a secret enemy of the ancient constitution of France, which they adored; having neither their attachment, prepossession, nor respect for royalty, nobility, and the Roman-catholic religion; opposite in principle and sentiment to the measures observed by his predecessors to sustain the edifice of cardinal Richelieu; he found himself quite a stranger at Versailles, and was obliged to have recourse to assurance, to the novelty and popular spirit of his writings, and, above all, to the truly new and remarkable invention of his public opinion, and the terrifying supposition of his power. In this situation it was necessary for him that the people should be an object of worship; that the hospitals and prisons, in which they suffered, should be consecrated places, as in democracies, where attention to the welfare of the people procures a momentary credit. Mr. Necker endeavoured so much to deserve it, that he

seemed only to be employed in his department for the benefit of the people, and sometimes for the most abject description of them, without considering that the head of the state was exposed to perils of a different nature.

CHAP. XXX.

Continuation of Mr. Necker's Character.—Of Cardinal Richelieu and Mr. Necker, considered as Enemies of the great Men of the State.—Of Richelieu, considered as the Founder of the Union and military Power of the House of Bourbon; and of Mr. Necker, considered as the Author of the Destruction of that Power, by the Introduction of his Plans for a limited Monarchy.—Triumph of the military Government of Lewis XIII., the Instrument of the Cardinal's Ambition.—Fall of the Monarchy of Lewis XVI., the Instrument of the Genevan's Ambition.—Richelieu proclaims the Power of his Projects—Mr. Necker denies them.

IF the multiplicity of operations so favourable to the people, and if the resentment of the great, had caused in the mind of Mr. Necker an exalted and sublime sentiment of *popular worship*, the *worship of the king* had been, in our ministers who established the royal power by state manœuvres, a sentiment equally exalted and profound. Cardinal Richelieu, at the time of his death, his hands still tinged with the most illustrious blood, addressing himself to Jesus Christ, when he was receiving the viaticum, said, "O my judge! condemn me if I have had any other intention than to serve the king and the state!"

Necker and Richelieu, endeavouring to serve the king by humiliating the great, have both made use of the strangest methods. But Richelieu made use of the monarch to concentrate his power, and Necker to divide and weaken it. Richelieu humbled them to elevate the royal authority, and Necker to create a democratic party in the state. The former had a view to the future greatness of the house of Bourbon; he saw afar off those brilliant reigns which are still the glory of Frenchmen, those reigns which were derived from his iron administration: the latter had equally the future power and prosperity of France in view; and yet it was precisely under his last administration that the devastations of anarchy began. The former established, and the latter destroyed, under two monarchs of weak character, the power of the house of Bourbon. Richelieu, of a resolute, implacable, and deliberate character, was skilful in supporting his authority when it was in danger; and he knew how to divest himself of his pride in the presence of his dissatisfied or suspecting master: the latter was equally firm, implacable, and deliberate; but he could not unite at will the wary style of submission to the elevated and sentimental manner which the nobility and magistracy, in their resentment, termed artifices of a mounte-

bank. The former likewise subjugated his master, even to the hour of his death, and converted the monarch into an instrument of his power; while the latter lost four times the favour of Lewis XVI., in 1781, 1787, 1789, and in 1791. Observe with what address Richelieu lays aside the pomp and consequence with which he had invested himself, to take a place among the valets, and wait upon Lewis XIII. Observe in what manner the latter transmits his resignation of the administration to the king. Richelieu, to obtain his ends, "dares not undertake any thing," as he expresses himself, "without having well reflected on it; but when his resolution is formed, he advances directly to the object, he overturns all obstacles, he mows down every thing before him, and covers the whole with his red cassock." He humbles the house of Austria. In Germany, he supports the protestant whom he persecutes in France. He strikes at the great men of the kingdom, and reduces them; he forces the queen-mother, his benefactress, to banish herself from the court of France; he subdues the king's brother and his wife: while Mr. Necker, sinking by degrees under a few sarcasms of M. de Maurepas, cannot foresee the possible effects of an obscure memorandum written by M. de Vergennes; cannot read,

in the hypocritical eyes of that minister, what he was operating against his plans.

The life of Richelieu and that of Necker are alike, as they relate to perpetual disputes with the nobility; but the former only delivered up individuals to the commissions that were devoted to him, while the latter united them in a mass with the democracy. Richelieu was the regulator of his own destructions; and Necker confided his to an assembly, which sometimes flattered and sometimes ridiculed him. The former only aimed at the life of his individual enemies; he did not destroy the order of nobility: the latter, wishing to concentrate the constitutional power of the nobility, of the second order of the state, in the compass of a chamber, destroyed the forms of government. Richelieu punished individual facts and injuries; Necker annihilated integral parts of the state, as ancient as the French monarchy itself. Richelieu, being a true statesman, was not an enemy of the protestants, in his quality of cardinal of the church of Rome. He leagued with the protestants of Germany against the house of Austria, in directing the towns to be burnt in Vivarais, the bosom of my country; in commanding in person on that strange expedition; in destroying the Rochelois; in hastening the misfortunes of Charles I., who sent them embassadors and

supplies; and in saying "that Charles I. should soon learn that he ought not to despise him;" and endeavoured to conciliate, by kind actions, the ministers of the persecuted French protestants: while Mr. Necker, more inveterate against the clergy, one of the three columns of ancient France, called in to his assistance the French presbyterians, composed of forty thousand rectors, who humbled the superiors of that order, overthrew their hierarchy, and abolished the ancient episcopacy. Richelieu destroyed the protestant religion, to establish the king in absolute power; and Mr. Necker destroyed the clergy, to reduce it.

Both the cardinal and the Genevan, after such daring enterprises, each according to his plan, must of course be calumniated by enraged enemies, and applauded by friends. Each of them felt the necessity of distributing writings or *political testaments*, to defend, justify, and praise their own operations; but in the cardinal's testament we read, that "he thought proper to burden the people with such contributions, that they might never depart from their dependance:" while the latter ruined France, rather than consent to enforce them; so much was that part of the nation become the object of his attention.

These two immortal men have each left some

relations, or descendants, who are anxious for the support of their doctrine; both have published, in the fervour of their opinions, some circumstantial works, to defend and propagate it; but the result of their turbulent and respective administrations is such, that the weak Lewis XIII. was the instrument of the former, to found the monarchy of Lewis XIV.; and the weak Lewis XVI. was the instrument of the latter, to destroy it. The former had succeeded in employing the docility of the nobility, to vanquish their untractable brethren. The latter failed in it, because the nature of the people is to destroy without establishing, and to bring every thing to a level; and because he could never find in France better instruments to support himself in the situation to which he was elevated.

The former, in fine, overturned a limited monarchy, in which the power was divided between the king, the nobility, the state-countries, and the states-general: and the latter, notwithstanding the artificial power of his public opinion, and the real power of the *tiers-état*, which was so long at his disposal, could not re-establish the monarchy in its moderate and anterior form. What he abased and destroyed was so completely done, that it is probable France can never recover it by re-organisation. An ephe-

meral monarchy, founded by a superabundance of popular suffrages, unnaturally assembled by Mr. Necker, was the first consequence of the destructions of 1789, and of his attempts to paralyse the chief and the first orders of the state. Since that epoch, we have seen France devoured by anarchy; we have seen her pass from one government to another, endeavouring every where to find liberty and prosperity, and some solid foundations. She is now under the government of the eighth year (1799), which, certainly, of all that we have yet experienced, is the most analogous to our manners and qualifications, as well as to our faults.

We must now hear the cardinal and the Genevese minister relative to the effect of their labours. "I die," said Richelieu, on his death-bed, to Lewis XIII., "with the satisfaction of leaving your majesty's government at the highest degree of reputation: your enemies are discouraged, and in the last state of dejection." Mr. Necker retired, leaving the king a prisoner at the Tuileries, and his enemies at the head of the state.

In his last work but one, he honours himself with the title of the most ancient friend of the people, and of that of first defender of liberty; he prides himself in having accelerated public

liberty by "all the means which reason, honour, and duty, had permitted him to use;" but in the last he no longer permits us to fathom the causes of the revolution, nor even to approach them. In it the sources of events are no more than *fore-running signs*; the grand force of public opinion is the most powerful principle; and Mr. Necker no longer acknowledges his former labours. We shall not attempt to strike out into new fields of history; but it is our duty to show, that he was not the only cause of the revolution, since he was in unison with the political spirit of the European powers, who, after having committed the fault of bringing that revolution about, attempt to reduce it by force of arms.

CHAP. XXXI.

Conclusion of the Character of Mr. Necker—He causes the Misery of France, by endeavouring to insure her Happiness.—In what Manner the general Disposition of France and Europe promoted the Effect.—The Cabinets of Sovereigns principal and first Authors of the French Revolution.

MR. Necker was far from being the first in Europe to introduce revolutionary principles at the head of a government. At the time of his nomination to the administration, Rome had accomplished the destruction of the jesuits, who were ever the principal supporters of the arbitrary power of the governments that encouraged them. This extirpation of a society so necessary to absolute authority, had been granted to the solicitations of the four reigning houses of the family of the Bourbons, and to that of Portugal. The court of Rome, attentive to the maintenance of power in courts depending on its worship, had therefore made the first breach in the ancient edifice of public authority.

The grand duke of Tuscany had carried still farther the spirit of philosophy and innovation. Naples had thrown off the sacerdotal yoke, and, following the example of Florence and Madrid,

had tied the hands of the inquisitors. The despotism of Venice was become more timid than in former ages.

At Vienna, Joseph II. meditated the most strange philosophical reforms. Catharine II., and Frederic, kept up a correspondence with the French philosophers, which was fatal to the repose of France, and daily encouraged them to render contemptible, by increased audacity, the religious institutions of the monarchy. In almost all the subaltern states of Germany, humanity and philosophy had attenuated, in some degree, the ancient energy of authority.

Gustavus III., emerging victoriously from anarchy, was among the small number of sovereigns who had learned the art of maintaining power without excess. Bernstorff, in Denmark, rendered it agreeable, amiable, and tolerant. The cabinet of London defended it, by force of arms, against the insurgents, who were supported by France; and the little republic of Geneva repressed the rising fury of the revolutionists of 1782 and 1793.

Thus, with the exception of England, Denmark, and Sweden, the cabinets of Europe had adopted the plan of ameliorating the fate of the people, of protecting the designs of humanity, and of disengaging them from the ties of sacerdotal power. Their measures partook of a

kind of liberty and beneficence unknown to anterior administrations.

To the influence of philosophy, therefore, as I have before said in my other works, history must attribute those changes in universal morality. It is not astonishing, that Mr. Necker, coming at this time to the administration, should have elevated himself to a level with the most commendable governments and sovereigns. It is not surprising, that his devotion to the cause of the people should be raised to a superior degree. He was the friend or partisan of Raynal, Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas, and all the writers who affected disdain for ancient policy, and for the established worship which they were so emulous to destroy.

But, if measures of universal beneficence were promulgated in Europe for the most numerous and least fortunate class of society, there was a great difference between that and the subversive speculation of the powers which exercised them. It was far different from metamorphosing a submissive and inoffensive people into a superior power, for the devastation of established authority. It was still more different from the grand, social, and constitutional transaction of the English, (which was the definitive result of sanguinary wars between the crown and its subjects, between the people and the

nobility,) and the ideal transaction, meditated in 1789, between three authorities so awkwardly constituted: and it is the introduction of this plan of transaction to the French government, which in England had been effected by anterior revolutions, that characterises the epoch of Mr. Necker's administration, and which distinguishes the terrible experiment he has tried on the French nation.

That minister, praised and calumniated by energetic and implacable men, may be defined in a few words.

In labouring for the happiness of France, Mr. Necker has plunged us into a gulf of evils. His first administration prepared this revolution; his second completed it.

The time of social transactions is but just commenced in France, under the government that now exists, in the 9th year. It has already brought together the discordant parties; and it separates them with address at the least appearance of approaching danger: if it continue with as much vigilance, the transaction will be definitively signed.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the Re-establishment of the Opposition in its lawful Place, at the Retreat of Mr. Necker, and of the Tranquillity of the Administration from that Epoch till the Debates between the Ex-Minister and M. de Calonne.

AT the fall of Mr. Necker, the administration was again left without a reformer; philosophy and *public opinion* were in disgrace; but the government enjoyed peace and tranquillity of sentiment for several years.

M. de Maurepas was worn out with age. He appeared to have made his last efforts in routing his adversary, but was likely not long to enjoy his victory. He acknowledged, but a little time before his death, that all his choices for the administration were not equally fortunate; and added, that Messrs. Necker, Malesherbes, St. Germain, and Turgot, had given the state some severe wounds.

The keeper of the seals, Hue de Miroménil, was of a quiet character, cautious of meddling with affairs of government, and wishing to avoid distinction. He had an idea, that the science of inaction was one of the first and most pre-

cious qualities of a minister. France, in effect, was never more happy, nor more powerful, during the whole of the eighteenth century, than when she was governed by timid ministers. M. Hue was impressed with these opinions, from his observations on turbulent administration.

The new minister of war, M. de Ségur, since made marshal of France, who had been promoted by the queen, brought into the administration a great deal of probity and knowledge of his employment, with a body almost without arms, and covered with wounds, which still attested his military services in the seven-years-war, as well as that of 1740. Like the other ministers, he felt that the agitations of government were a great scourge to France. He had no reason to fear, that a marshal's commission, so well merited, would be torn by the furies of a revolution. He was the last of the marshals created by Lewis XVI.

The marquis, since marshal, de Castries, minister of marine, was less averse to Mr. Necker's political movements than any of the rest; he regretted him as one of his friends, without imitating the turbulence of his genius.

Amelot was a lover of order, timid, and reserved; honest, and piously devoted to M. de Maurepas.

M. de Vergennes, delivered from a neighbour whose systems disquieted his timid imagination, remained quiet in his department.

All these ministers, endowed with what Mr. Necker's public opinion called confined ideas, procured the only quiet time which the reign of Lewis XVI. had enjoyed, and which lasted for five years. It would have remained unalterably so, if the queen had not succeeded in dismissing the virtuous d'Ormesson, and putting M. de Calonne in his place.

As to M. Joly de Fleury, who immediately succeeded Mr. Necker, he was placed in a most cruel embarrassment. He would willingly have re-established the ancient principles and institutions in the finances, but he had to fear the concatenations of Mr. Necker's *public opinion* against the doctrine of *imposts and loans:* To have laid on duties in 1781, would have been a high crime against the nation: hence, he made use of the funds which his successor had left in abundance, and then skilfully adopted a medium between the two doctrines, by which he drew supplies both from loans and imposts.

The maxims, principles, writings, and conduct of Mr. Necker were forgotten by the opposition, and were arranged and mixed with *public opinion.* Disconcerted by events, he was a long time silent and reserved towards the new

minister. M. de Fleury also was prudent, modest, and just towards Mr. Necker, until the latter attempted again to revive his *public opinion*, with additional warmth and parade, by agitating afresh the department he had quitted, and to which he was to be called a second time, for the entire execution of his plans.

As to the alternative of opposite administrations, Mr. Necker conceived, that the continual change of principles was the natural effect of their frequent succession in France, and of the irritation of the new ministers against their predecessors, ever disagreeably affected towards their ideas, credit, and reputation; blaming what they praised, praising what they blamed, and choosing for counsellors and friends those whom the anterior administration had neglected or abused.

M. de Fleury's administration was so peaceful and benign, that its return to ancient maxims made an almost insensible progress. The turbulent administration of Mr. Necker had lasted five years; and the succeeding calm was of equal duration. The grand perfection of the human species was thus retarded during five years. Happy had it been for the court of France, if it had taken advantage of that halcyon period to moderate its pleasures and dissipations.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Character of M. Joly de Fleury and M. d'Ormesson, immediate Successors of Mr. Necker—Quietism of the Administration.—Anarchy in the Department of the Finances.—Result of Mr. Necker's Operations—His Destruction of the ancient Credit of the King.—Refusal of the Bankers to supply the Wants of the State under M. d'Ormesson.—France sinks under the Weight of Engagements contracted by Mr. Necker.—M. de Castries proposes to the King to restore that Minister.—Decision of the Administration, and Character of Mr Necker, by M. de Castries.—Lewis XVI.'s Sentiments on Mr. Necker, in the Month of November 1783.—Correspondence between the King and M. de Vergennes on that Subject.—A Revolution in the Caisse d'Escompte accelerates the Retreat of M. d'Ormesson.

M. De Fleury, succeeding to a turbulent administration, distinguished himself by the calmness of his operations. This was neither the method to provide for the accumulating expenses of a court, nor to discharge the engagements of Mr. Necker.

The former was succeeded by M. d'Ormesson. He was actuated, like his predecessor, by virtuous intentions, and was recommended by an illustrious name, personal reputation, and the tranquillity of a just and perceptive mind. He was a stranger at a court which required a di-

lapidating minister; and the administration of Mr. Necker had placed him in a state of absolute impotence. He could not create taxes, because Mr. Necker had dishonoured them. He could not borrow, because credit was annihilated. The queen, whose influence was become very preponderating since the death of Maurepas and the birth of the dauphin, was secretly embarrassed with the probity of the minister of the finances. The faction of bankers, falling again under the direction of a minister belonging to the magistracy, destroyed the credit established by Mr. Necker. The state was left in such a situation, that it could neither derive resources from the aristocratic credit depending on the ancient hierarchy of the financiers, nor from the democratic credit of the bankers organised by Mr. Necker in his department.

In effect, credit was thus divided under the ancient constitution. At the head of this department was, first, the minister taken from the judiciary or administrative magistracy; secondly, the intendants of finance and commerce were in the first rank, as his counsellors and tribunal; thirdly, the treasurers-general made the second rank; fourthly, the farmers-general appeared in the third rank, with the receivers-general.

The influence of the first degrees on the subsequent ones, the credit resulting from this in-

fluence, and their mutual interest to support the edifice of the department, had supplied the state in its real necessities, and had never abandoned it but when the sovereigns were evidently ruining the kingdom by expense.

The revolution effected by Mr. Necker had substituted anarchy for the monarchical organisation of that department; it had precipitated into nothing his colleague, M. Taboureau; it had exchanged a magistrate minister for a banker minister, without any intermediary, except obscure clerks, between him and the organised tumultuous assembly of bankers; is it therefore astonishing, that the magistracy should turn their backs on him? Strangers to the new dispositions, they could not attach themselves even to M. d'Ormesson, and the state has never recovered the destruction of the ancient department of the finances—a destruction which has been one of the immediate causes of the subsequent revolutions. In the constitution of Mr. Necker, the ancient hierarchy had been delivered over to public ridicule; its individuals were dispersed; and its companies, accused of all manner of robbery, were no more. The director-general had indeed substituted bankers in their places, but with so little regard to hierarchical forms, essential to the morals and existence of every department, that a minister

of the finances found himself isolated from all means of support from those newly-invented financiers, who had no tie, like that of their predecessors, to the maintenance of the machine. This revolution was imperceptible: at first it was only seen by a few observers; and it was not till France felt the weight of her debt that she opened her eyes to the romantic and delusive system of Necker. In effect, this department passed from opulence, derived from loans, to a state of penury and distress, by the retreat of the bankers, who, finding neither colleague nor confidant at the head of government, turned their backs on its measures, and refused their assistance at a time when it became most necessary. And such was the destiny of the unfortunate monarch, that, deprived of the credit depending on the ancient constitution; deprived, by the retreat of Mr. Necker, of the artificial credit which the director-general had substituted for it; he was abandoned by his former servants, as well as by the new financiers which Necker had attached to his existence. The king was become the shuttle-cock of the ancient and modern government, and was reduced to this critical situation by the establishment of the periodical reimbursements, which the ordinary revenues were unable to cover. It was now evident that France touched upon a

period when it would be proved, that borrowing was either the same thing as taxation, or else was the sure road to bankruptcy; and that the nature of the system of Mr. Necker was nothing more than a cruel display of oratory, which opened the way to a revolution.

Such was the situation of M. d'Ormesson. His predecessor, Fleury, had found resources from Mr. Necker's want of address during his administration. Instead of answering the pecuniary demands of the king by degrees, as he had done at the beginning of his administration, he forgot for a moment this caution, granted abundant supplies, and put the court in a situation to let him depart at a time they were assured of the good state of the treasury. Fleury profited by it; but d'Ormesson found himself at a total loss how to fulfil Necker's engagements with the lenders. The ancient financiers, at this conjuncture, were divided, dispersed, and displaced. They no longer knew the real state of the finances; they had themselves contributed to render problematic the exactness of the *Compte rendu;* they had lost the concatenation of the affairs of the department in which they were most interested; and they asserted, that France was no longer able to pay forty millions of annuities, or annual

reimbursements, with which the disastrous operations of Mr. Necker had burdened the state.

On another side, the bankers had confidence in the probity of M. d'Ormesson; but they said, it was a probity that might at every instant trick them in turn, by the re-establishment, for instance, of the company of farmers-general, and overturn the edifice of the Genevese director. Thus, the state was reduced to the greatest distress, and credit was so weak at the end of 1783, that M. Calonne informed the king, on entering the treasury, he had only found two bags of 1200 livres. Under these troublesome circumstances, M. d'Ormesson was obliged to have recourse to the administration of the *caisse d'escompte*. The administrators were overcome by the reputation of the minister of the finances, and advanced some notes to the state, at the very time, 1783, that they had issued paper to the amount of nearly fifty millions. On this occasion, a wretch, whose name I forbear to mention, having notes for the sum of 100,000 crowns, developed the state of the bank, and alarmed the capital. He chose the moment of the influx of the realisers, and, presenting himself, demanded the exchange of a sum that did not belong to him; but, as there was no cash, they were obliged to compact,

and begged him to mention terms....In an instant the capital was informed, that the bank had stopped payment; that the state had emptied it for its own use; and that the system of Law was renewed. The holders of notes are seised with sudden terror, and thirty millions of paper are immediately presented at the bank, to be realised. Such was the scene that passed under our eyes in the month of October 1783.

Observers were now busy in examining the nature of Messrs. Turgot and Necker's institutions. A *caisse d'escompte* is undoubtedly admirable in a free state, where the whole nation is concerned; but we perceive its dangers and phænomena in a monarchy such as France in 1783.

This scene stirred up Mr. Necker's partisans against M. d'Ormesson. The principal bankers interested in the *caisse d'escompte*, becoming from that day more cautious, the state was again deprived of its illusory and momentary assistance, and the courtiers took advantage of that misfortune to get rid of the troublesome probity of the minister of the finances.

M. de Castries now recollected, that he was indebted for his place to Mr. Necker, and pointed him out to the king as the only person capable of re-establishing the credit of the state; but M. de Vergennes, who had occasioned

his retreat, was interested, for that reason, in keeping him out of office. The king at this time honoured M. de Vergennes with the confidence which Maurepas once enjoyed, and was guided by his advice in all public concerns.

It was in this situation of affairs that M. de Castries, who alone could mention Mr. Necker to the king with any effect, proposed to that prince to re-establish him in the administration. His memorial is dated, November 1, 1783.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Character of Mr. Necker, by Marshal de Castries.—Sentiments of Lewis XVI. on Mr. Necker, in the Month of November 1783.

"I INTREAT your majesty will deign to read with kindness what my duty impels me to place before your eyes, and to have the goodness to believe, that, when I speak to my master on the most important subject that has ever engaged his attention, I should conceive myself to be the most culpable of men if I had any other view than the good of your majesty's service.

"I esteem the probity of M. d'Ormesson; I have every reason to speak well of him since he has been in place. My wish is, that he could keep it; for every change in the finances must have a bad effect.

"If the affairs of finance are arrived at such a pitch of discredit, that the operations of confidence are no longer to be relied on; if, in fine, your majesty shall be obliged to make a change, I take the liberty to supplicate you to consider the invaluable man who now remains inactive; I beg your majesty to remember,

that Lewis XIV., without Colbert, would never, perhaps, have obtained the name of Lewis the Great; that the secret wish of the nation, which ever ought to be considered by a good king, is, that the enlightened, economical, and incorruptible man, whom the hand of providence once gave to your majesty, should be re-instated in his former functions.

"The arguments of some interested persons may prevent this determination; but I solemnly declare to your majesty, that it is the desire of every Frenchman devoted to his sovereign. In the violent moments of war, when circumstances command, every method to support it appears just; but when that is terminated, and sacred engagements remain to be performed; when it is necessary to provide for a respectable peace establishment, and, what is still more respectable, the happiness of your people; can your majesty resolve to seek, in the inexperience of another man, an additional source of misfortune and long regret?

"The faults of your other ministers, sire, are almost always to be repaired, and their places are easily filled up; but the choice of him who is charged with the happiness of twenty-four millions of souls, and the cherishing of your majesty's authority, is of the most alarming importance.

"With Mr. Necker, sire, even in time of peace, the imposts, such as they were, would be levied without murmurs. The nation would be convinced, that it was a law of indispensable necessity, and justified by a wise administration.

"In a choice on which the destiny of so many people depend, by choosing the man of opinion, the man who has been proved, your majesty's conscience will be at rest; you may then enjoy that precious repose, which is engendered by the sentiment of having done a good action: but if your majesty risk an administration on which all the others depend, it is to be feared, that embarrassments will multiply with the choice you are obliged to make; your majesty will see each day's labour destroyed by the next; and, at length, no other remedy will be found to serve the state, than breaking your majesty's engagements, and thereby destroy the confidence which the commencement of your reign had inspired *.

"It was neither ambition nor pride, sire, that prompted Mr. Necker to stipulate for conditions, it was because he was disgusted with being so long insulted; he felt the impossibility of supporting his credit, if some ostensible mark

* The queen effectively caused M. de Calonne to be nominated; and we know what has been the consequence of it.

of your majesty's favour were not exhibited in his favour.

"I dare flatter myself, sire, that your majesty will not imagine this letter to have been dictated either by friendship or intrigue; I act from disinterested principles; and no person in the world is acquainted with my present interference *.

"I have been induced to this step by an idea of promoting your majesty's peace of mind, and the glory of your reign; and should be ashamed of myself, if, in serving the best and most indulgent of masters, I remained silent from fear of your majesty's suspecting me of any personal interest, by speaking of a man whose probity and merit I revere. I trust your majesty will never perceive, either in my sentiments or proceedings, any other motive than the most ardent zeal for your glory and happiness."

M. de Castries had been made minister by Mr. Necker at the time M. de Sartines was dismissed, and therefore wished to show his gratitude: but the king thought differently. "I am sensible," said he, in his answer, "of your

* M. de Castries certainly wrote this letter, but he did not compose it: he was only the copyist, although he thought what he wrote.

zeal for my service, and am of your opinion respecting the changes, but sometimes circumstances oblige us to adopt them. As to Mr. Necker, I must tell you plainly, that, *from the manner in which I treated him, and from his leaving me as he did,* I cannot think of taking him again into my service, in any situation. As for the rest, sir, do not suppose that your friendship for him has done you any injury in my mind."

Hence, either the king disguised his real intention in excluding Mr. Necker from the administration, or that minister had shut the doors against himself, by his truly republican answer to the king, on the 19th of May 1781.

But whether the king acted with duplicity or not in his answer to M. de Castries, or whether Mr. Necker had incurred his resentment since that time, it is certain that the monarch was so far deceived as to imagine that Necker was employed in frustrating the operations of his successors in the finances, and, in consequence, took measures to prevent the ex-director from returning again to Paris.

The administration of the finances was filled up a few days after. The king had been preceded in his choice by some secret and shameful intrigues. Foulon, a man of bad principles and character, but useful and even essential to

the manners of the court, had dared to place himself in the rank of preferment. It was already hinted, that the court was on the point of re-establishing the administration of the abbé Terray. The archbishop of Toulouse was also soliciting for the office; but the king, since the unfavourable impressions he had received from Turgot, would have no more ecclesiastics; and though the former had fallen into the opinion of the times against his own profession, the king had not sufficient regard for an atheistical bishop to grant him his request. Calonne was still in the rank of promotion;—but I shall not anticipate what will be said of him hereafter, in its proper place. I only mention him now, in order to follow the train of the effects of Mr. Necker's administration, and not to separate from that epoch the subsequent facts, which form a complete part of history. I merely observe, that M. de Calonne was appointed to succeed M. d'Ormesson, and that his first endeavour was to obtain credit. Having no dependence on the banks, his primary operation was to rebuild the ancient edifice.

CHAP. XXXV.

Mr. Necker addresses a Work to the King, which he dedicates to the Nation—Character of his Letter to the King; its timid and respectful Style; and the Audacity of his Proceedings—The King's Opinion thereon—Unanimous Decisions of the Administration assembled against Mr. Necker, under the Auspices of M. de Vergennes—Report made to the King to obtain the Proscription of the new Work, and also the Person of its Author—Goodness of that Prince.

MR. Necker, observing the re-establishment of the system and bodies which he had destroyed, informed of the king's refusal to recall him to the direction of the finances, and finding at the head of his department only a provincial intendant, an ancient magistrate, a man of wit, and a vicious character; that is to say, every thing opposite to his plans, manners, and projects; recommenced his hostilities against the ancient *régime* of the finances, and published his treatise *on the Administration of the Finances of France*, in three volumes.

Informed, without doubt, that Lewis XVI. still remembered the manner of his retreat, he took a new method of addressing his work to him. By reading his letter to the king, we may

be able to judge of his new way of thinking; and by the king's letter to M. de Vergennes, we may see in what point of view that prince considered his determination; while M. de Calonne's report developes the embarrassment and uneasiness the ex-director's new work occasioned in the council.

Mr. Necker's Letter to Lewis XVI. on presenting him with the Treatise on the Administration of the Finances.

"SIRE,

"With the most respectful timidity, I take the liberty of sending, for your majesty's gracious acceptance, a work which has employed me during the hours of retirement. At the time of my undertaking it, I knew not that I should ever make it public; and when it was completed, some considerable motives still rendered it uncertain. I intreat your majesty not to draw any conclusions from my remarks before you have read them throughout. I place my confidence on your majesty's calm and superior manner of judging of men and things; for I have left no friend about the court, though it was easy enough for me to have done so. Far from the metropolis, and having nothing to hope for, it is from a sentiment worthy of your majesty's great qualities that I ardently desire

your approbation; and it is with a heart penetrated with your infinite bounty that I presume at least to implore your indulgence.

"I intreat your majesty to accept my most profound sentiments of love and respect, which I shall retain to the hour of my death, and which are united with those I owe your majesty, as his most humble and most obedient servant.

"NECKER."

This letter did not produce the effect which the ex-director intended. Lewis was extremely surprised at the proceeding. Shocked at the publication of a work without the participation of government, he expressed his astonishment to his confidential minister. The book was, in effect, a disguised appeal to the people, although sent with respectful timidity to the king, and *dedicated to the nation.* Mr. Necker besides took the liberty to infringe upon the laws of the state, at a time when the ministers were giving examples of their authority, and punishing offenders. The king took notice of it, in a very remarkable letter to M. de Vergennes.

"Herewith you will receive, sir, the work, which I have run over slightly, and you will find in it here and there some notes, without connexion with each other. At all events, on a supposition

that his intentions were good, he ought, in my opinion, to have addressed the work, in manuscript, to his successor, without publishing it to the world; but he has wished to encourage his party; and, because he has foreseen my intentions, he has been beforehand with me, and anticipated the customs which sanction its publication. You will perceive in his letter the meanness of his views. He must be informed of the effect of that which announced his resignation."

M. de Vergennes, at this conjuncture, obtained from the king an employment of favour and interest, that of chief of the royal council of the finances. He several times assembled the ministers, to consult on the means of eluding the effect of Mr. Necker's new publication. All the council of state met at his house, except M. de Castries, whose attachment to the ex-director was very evident. Marshal de Ségur, baron de Breteuil, count de Vergennes, M. de Calonne, and two others of the council of the finances, had frequent conferences; and we may judge of their embarrassment, from the secret memorial which was the result of them. M. de Vergennes had done the ex-director several private injuries; but this time the attack was general throughout the council, and appeared decisive. They in-

tended nothing less than to proscribe Mr. Necker, according to the project of 1781, to which the king had refused his sanction.

"The ministers and faithful servants of the king," said they to the monarch, "agree in the idea, that the most pressing reasons of state demand and require, that your majesty should banish to his own country a foreigner, who has betrayed the confidence of an indulgent master, and who has even distributed anti-monarchical maxims, to excite resistance against the actual administration, and to disturb the public tranquillity.

"Those who conceive it their duty, at this time, to insist strongly on this necessity, might, perhaps, have to reproach themselves, if they did not, the moment Mr. Necker's work appeared, propose to your majesty to proscribe both the book and the author.

"At the time he dared to transmit the work directly to the king and queen, there had been already a great number of copies sold in the provinces, and twenty were at the same time distributed among the most zealous partisans at Paris. Suppressing, and endeavouring to prevent its sale in the capital, would have been only a vain effort; it would have overcome such an obstacle, and the prohibition would have been nothing more than an additional

inducement to read it; it would have given more force to the enthusiasm of its admirers, and have rendered the criticisms of men of sense more ineffectual.

"On the other side, to punish the author before the venom of his work had manifested itself by effects, might have appeared too rigorous: he was undoubtedly guilty of an abuse of confidence, but he was not become a disturber of the public tranquillity; and, although it was easy to perceive the danger of his maxims, we could not foresee the strange fermentation which his book has occasioned *.

"Ought we to have expected this, in the midst of the most peaceful and satisfactory situation that the administration has ever experienced; when the capital and provinces were free from every species of embarrassment; when all the assemblies of the states, even that of Bretany, were conducted with the greatest tranquillity and the most distinguished success; when there was abundance of money in circulation and in the treasury, payments punctually

* The king's council must undoubtedly mean, by this abuse of confidence, that Mr. Necker published the plans, memorials, and projects, that he had received as director-general, without the consent of his successors, and in defiance of the laws which require ministers to leave all papers relative to their administration in the hands of government.

made, and persons ready to lend; in a word, when every thing announced confidence, and established security? In such a conjuncture, it was natural enough to suppose that a collection of transactions in the finances, with whatever design they might have been put together, and whatever might be the deception of their style, would only be productive of vain dissertations on the principles they contain; that opinions would be divided between the administrators and their opposers; that the latter would exalt the talents and principles of the author, and the former become the victims of the theory and falsity of his calculations; in fine, that the eulogiums of his disciples would be counterbalanced, either by the indignation due to their temerity and treason, in exposing the secrets of the state, or by the impression which excess of the most disgusting vanity, and the most barefaced views of personal interest, must necessarily inspire.

"But at present, when it is evident that this book has disconcerted every mind, and re-animated every intrigue; that it is become the rallying point of all those who wish for confusion, and hope to gain by it; that it has also raised a multiplicity of calumnies, atrocities, and false reports, tending to destroy confidence; that it is made use of to give credit to the most dangerous maxims,

to announce the changes which are wished for; and to excite a general fermentation, extending from the capital to the provinces, and resounding even to the courts of other countries; in fine, now that the partisans and associates of Mr. Necker flatter themselves they shall be able to realise his dogmas on the empire of public opinion in his favour, affect to despise and cry down all that has been done since his time, and even all that we could do without him; it is time, we can confidently declare, it is full time, to cast out, beyond the limits of the kingdom, this nursery of intrigues and troubles, which can never be destroyed until the principle of hope, by which they are nourished, be totally cut off.

"Parliamentary denunciations, and public prosecutions, followed by successive judiciary condemnations, appeared likely to settle the minds of the people, and stay the progress of the evil; but since this publication has appeared, we have been obliged to spread so many doubts and uncertainties respecting your majesty's intentions among the magistrates; and it is, besides, so easy, at the present day, to excuse and adopt what seems to tend to the weakening of authority, that there is great reason to fear a juridical examination of the work would only lead to dangerous discussions, divide opinions and persons, and occasion such a contest of sen-

timent, that, whatever might be the result, must surely work more evil than good; in effect, the friends of the author would not fail to take advantage of it, they would attribute the votes which might be given for its condemnation to the influence of authority, and would only consider as free suffrages, those that were exerted in their behalf.

" Perhaps, even, there would be a kind of danger in giving an idea, that authority had occasion, in such a circumstance, to rely on the decision of the sovereign courts; particularly if the parliament, after making their report of the condemnation of the book, and referring the punishment of the author to your majesty, should find, that he was only ordered into exile. This resolution, in such a case, would have less effect, and appear less important than if emanating from the proper source.

" We are all of opinion, that tranquillity cannot be re-established on any permanent foundation, unless your majesty interpose, and silence all parties by a very particular manifestation of your will, thereby rendering to your ministers that consideration and importance which their situations require. We conceive it prudent to prevent the disagreeable and perhaps embarrassing sensation which the sudden arrival of Mr. Necker might occasion; and to that effect we take the liberty to implore, that your

majesty will instantly commission the baron de Breteuil to transmit him an order to depart from the kingdom."

I have not been able to discover whether the order was signified to Mr. Necker by M. de Breteuil. The former, who has recounted his different misfortunes in his works, has not informed us if he received a *lettre-de-cachet* in virtue of the publication of his book on the administrations. It is, however, proved, that the proscription was unanimously requested. The king, in the former case, would have had more time to reflect on the injustice and inconvenience of the proscription. The letter which follows, addressed to M. de Vergennes, proves, nevertheless, that the vicinity of Mr. Necker caused him some uneasiness; it is dated the 23d of May, 1785, and the king speaks in it of the ex-director in the following terms:

"I know not, sir, if I am guilty of an indiscretion; but my confidence in you induces me to conceal nothing from you. M. d'Angiviller sent me the note, without saying if it was by my desire or not; it is true that the queen asked me, in consideration of Mr. Necker's bad state of health, to let him come and pass some time near Paris, to have an opportunity of consulting with the physicians. I granted it, on condition that he should not enter the metro-

polis, nor see much company. I must inform you, that before the queen asked me this favour, she wished to know if there was any operation of finance in agitation, and told me, she would not request it if there were. Upon the whole, she appeared to me, as I before knew, to be very little attached to his person. I must acknowledge, that I see very little difference between a province no great distance off, and a country-seat. Lyons, perhaps, was still worse, on account of the stock-jobbers. I also thought, that showing indifference as to his residence would give him less celebrity. I did not mean, however, to lose sight of him or his friends; I sent for M. de Castries, after the queen had made her request, and informed him of what I had told her majesty; and, I added, that he ought to remember, that two years ago, at the departure of M. d'Ormesson, I had formally declared, that neither Mr. Necker nor his friends ought to imagine that he would be again employed; that if he remained quiet, and if his friends made no more mention of him, I should not interfere; but if he caused any disturbance, or did any thing contrary to the operations of government, I should conceive myself attacked, and I would then send him to Geneva, never more to set his foot in France. I leave to your prudence the communication of what you please

on the subject to the controller-general; I thought of speaking to him myself on Thursday, but that, perhaps, will be too late. I rely on his discretion for particulars; he may say, that the person of Mr. Necker is indifferent to him, and that, depending on my goodness, as well as that of the queen, he fears nothing; but, above all, let him take care of his true and false friends; as long as he only meddles with public affairs, he may remain in safety. I cannot conclude this letter without reminding you, that the (20) (10) May is passed. I trust that it will again pass over as this has done.

"LEWIS."

We may perceive, that if the administration was no longer exteriorly agitated, as in the time of Mr. Necker, its interior still experienced some storms resulting from his operations; and M. de Castries, who belonged to the party of Choiseul, possessed of a character and mind susceptible of resolution, would perhaps have been able to re-establish Mr. Necker in the administration, at the death of M. de Maurepas, if the king, whom his confidential ministers ever rendered simple and credulous towards them, had not delivered himself up to M. de Vergennes so entirely, that de Castries no longer dared to mention the Genevese director to the king, and was obliged to transmit, in writing,

any propositions he had to make in his favour, in order to be assured that he should be heard to the end. The king, in effect, had said publicly to some friends of Messrs. Choiseul and Necker: "Let no one talk to me again of that man," naming the premier, "nor of Mr. Necker." In the month of January, 1785, he said, loud enough to be heard by every one: "I will hear no more of Mr. Necker's plans, nor suffer my kingdom to be made a clamorous republic, continually debating on affairs of state, like the city of Geneva, and as it was during Mr. Necker's administration." It is certain, that the agitations of his two administrations will occupy more than two-thirds of the history of Lewis XVI.

It was known at this time, that Mr. Necker had seen de Castries privately; that he was concealed in his wardrobe; and that the apartments of M. de Castries were full of people, who knew nothing of his spending whole hours together with the ex-director, in writing and conversation. A nobleman, who sometimes visited him, was not a little surprised, one day, to see the wardrobe-door half opened, and Mr. Necker walk out with a memorial in his hand.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Definitive Analysis of Public Opinion during Mr. Necker's two Administrations—Analysis by the Works of Art—Analysis by the Works of the Republic of Letters—Pride and Fragility of this pretended Public Opinion—It is discomposed in proportion as the Revolutionary Spirit divides, neutralises, or changes itself.

THE works of art, and the writings and opinions of men of letters, are the only remaining monuments of *public opinion*, by which Mr. Necker pretended he was supported during his two administrations. Those noisy societies, divided on his account; those meetings, so animated for or against his operations; those districts, and those clubs of the metropolis, which held forth on his genius and plans; and those leaders of revolutionary factions, endeavouring to annihilate him, or immortalise his name, are no more; but their works exist, and it is our duty to judge them with justice and deliberation.

The engravings which were published on account of that celebrated man are at once a proof

of the great sensation his innovations had produced in France, the country of arts. All of them announced the energy of public opinion in favour of his proceedings. The ninety-eighth volume of my collection of prints on our national history contains as many as sixty-six engravings relative to his first administration. His second administration produced eighty-three. What enthusiasm in the imagination of French artists in favour of the minister! They drew his portrait for bracelets, snuff-boxes, and medallions. The glory of Mr. Necker effaced that of Sully and Colbert. The Genevese minister is the good genius, the saviour, and Hercules of France. Like Geneva, after the reform, he draws light from darkness, POST TENEBRAS LUX. We had fallen into nothing; he brought us to existence. QUI NOBIS RESTITUIT REM. Like a beneficent sun, he illumines the world. Envy, error, vice, monsters, and tyranny, appear; he kills, decapitates them, and throws their remains at his feet. The *Compte rendu* alone produces eighteen engravings, and inflames every imagination. The river Necker flows upon our territory, and fertilises it. They multiply his virtues and deifications. At the eve of the revolution, the engraver who publishes the popular caricatures of the Orleans' party adds those of the glory of Mr. Necker; and soon (what is

neither very politic nor very constitutional) the farmers-general, the financiers, and the first orders of the state are trodden under his feet. We are forced to admire the agony, death, and funeral procession of abuses. At the *Palais Royal* they flog a woman who had dared to speak ill of him; and this indecent drawing is engraved three times. This disorder of ideas soon arrives at such a pitch, that we no longer find in their productions any relative degrees, or any difference between the French monarch and the minister. In a short time the irregularity of the artist is such, that Lewis XVI. and Necker are united, and placed on a level, or are observed pendent in the same engraving.

Our quays have been lined during his two administrations with all these rarities; we have observed the lower class of people stop and form themselves into groupes, to admire these works, inspired by public opinion. And who would have dared, at that time, to speak ill of Mr. Necker's power and equity? Yet, was there ever a more fictitious, ideal, or romantic authority, heard of in France? There were many prints, and I have procured some drawings (of which Mr. Necker's two retreats prevented the publication), that were done by order; but, in general, artists who had neither knowledge nor judgment were the inventors of

these picturesque ideas. From the commencement of the revolution, also, they were employed at Mr. Necker's expense; they passed from one faction to another, floating at random in every party; so that artists devoted to the ancient *régime*, and those of the constituents, girondists, and montagnards, have successively engraved plates in honour of Mr. Necker, and caricatures against him. The most beautiful and best of the engravings was the work of a leader of the Septembrisers. Such, then, was public opinion, with regard to Mr. Necker, in the republic of arts, that if ingenious men exhaust their talents to immortalise him, a few months pass over, and public opinion is dissolved, like the confused interests of his partisans; and the artists, who had laboured to celebrate the glory of the Genevese minister, are now employed in tarnishing it. Thus ends, among the artists, the drama of public opinion invoked by Mr. Necker. What a lesson for the reformers of empires!

There was a particular class among these artists, that deserves some mention. This class, like that of the *literati*, possessed characters of great versatility. Among the engravings relative to Mr. Necker's administration, there is one which represents his apotheosis admired by a young person (madame de Stael), who seems in ecstasy, with a pen in her hand, at the sight of

the attributes of her father's glory. The artist, of a changeable humour, being informed of Mr. Necker's disgrace in 1781, scratches out his face on the plate, and substitutes the head of M. de Vergennes, his antagonist, still leaving the figure of madame de Stael in the same position. The revolutionary government taking place in 1793, the artist now effaces the head of M. de Vergennes, and puts in that of Marat, which madame de Stael continues to admire.

The decisions and transactions of the republic of letters, relating to Mr. Necker, are still much more expressive and conclusive than those of the arts. The high finance and magistracy never varied their style against him; he is still the same to that party in the year 9 (1800), as in 1788. As to the writings dictated by the public opinion of the times in his favour, no persuasions or artifices were left untried to seduce the minds and engage the affections of the people. With what constancy did they defend him during his first administration, and support him after his disgrace! In what manner did they extol him in the time of his absence, by devoting his enemies to infamy, beginning with M. de Maurepas! Read the character of that minister by the abbé Raynal. How they pride themselves on being the organs of national opinion in regard to the ex-director! How have they

succeeded in causing him to be recalled to the administration in 1788, with the title of *minister of state!*.... In witnessing these operations, these forerunning symptoms of a revolution, who would not have concluded, that the writers, attached to the glory of Mr. Necker, were in reality the organs of national opinion in 1788?

The friends of the Genevese minister were unfortunately nothing more than a class of writers, or revolutionary enthusiasts, as badly organised as the artists above mentioned. He was without the support of the chief men of the empire, who had now met to determine on the relative establishment of the three chambers. They decided in one manner, and he in another. They cherished the monarchical opinion of France, and he supported what he called public opinion; and as the latter was neither countenanced by the supreme magistracy, the high finance, nor the superior clergy, because Mr. Necker had lost their suffrages in his first administration, his public opinion was of course that of the *tiers-état*, on account of his spirited opposition to all the established authorities in 1788.

Now, what were the elements of the party of the *tiers-état* in 1788 and 1789? Was not this party the amicable, fraternal, and unanimous association of constituents against the regal

government of 1788? Was not this association composed, in the month of May 1789, of the constituents of the party of Mounier, Bergasse, and Lally-Tolendal, of that of the first constitution, and of the Brissotine, cordelier, and montagnard parties? Were not all these, who have since imprisoned, killed, and destroyed each other, brothers and friends in 1788? Is it forgotten with what zeal, courage, and attachment, they supported each other against the troops in the *champ-de-mars?* or how they declared themselves the organs and protectors of public opinion, obliging the monarch to recall the exiled minister in the month of July 1789? Yet, observe how this constituent party since abandons their leader, their hero. Mounier, his pupil, throws out the first signal of public censure against him. Soon the principals of the party quit their ranks, divide, abandon the field, and suffer Mr. Necker to make good his retreat to Copet alone, leaving France a prey to every kind of destruction, and execrated himself by cordeliers, Orleanists, constitutional jacobins, Robespierrists, and republicans. All of them had emulously united to elevate him to the skies, and all had combined to accomplish his disgrace.

From the analytical history of the public opinion cited by Mr. Necker as his protec-

ting and tutelar divinity, as well as the object of his worship and of his cares in the administration, it results, that this divinity, during his two administrations, was only the opinion of the revolutionists and the first author of the events of 1789; it was the aggregation of the philosophical and reforming ideas which France had adopted, and which may be perceived among every people who introduce revolutions as the means of reform. No revolution can restore; its exclusive attribute is destruction. The power of creating consists in other measures; as the continuation of our work will demonstrate.

In concluding the history of Mr. Necker's administration, it is my duty to mention a concise representation of it, given at the end of *Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé*, which are just published. The marquis describes that minister as the instrument and cause of the French revolution; he defends him against the accusations of sedition and conspiracy; he declares, that he has not betrayed either the king or the nation, but that his services injured them; he blames him for not having opposed the errors of public opinion; for submitting to it against the impulse of his own conscience, and for having adopted nothing more than vain speculations for the support of a tottering throne; he thinks him culpable for undertaking so difficult a task, for

having passively contributed to the demolition of the monarchy, and for having placed his own panegyric at the head of this terrible and eventful history. He asserts, that it is the eternal fate of the multitude to be governed by the few; and, that the smaller number of rulers there were, the better the state would be governed. M. Bouillé does justice to the moral character of Mr. Necker, but declares him to be author of the misfortunes of France, which he attributes to the imprudence of his measures, to the insufficiency of his knowledge, and to the application of philosophical principles to politics.

"As to you modern philosophers," says he, "your disastrous doctrines have caused more blood to be spilt in a few years than the barbarous policy, the ignorance and fanaticism of our ancestors have done in the course of many ages. How will you repair the evils you have occasioned? What a terrible lesson for future generations!"

REIGN OF LEWIS XVI.

CONCLUSION OF THE FIFTH EPOCH;

OR

THE LIBERTY OF AMERICA

acknowledged in Europe at the Peace of 1783; *with the History of the Conduct of the House of Austria towards France, during the English War.*

A monarchy, established upon a respectable footing, is the only real security that your majesty can have for the duration of the peace with England. That proud and haughty nation will not be satisfied with having purchased it by sacrifices; and she will neglect no opportunity to renew the flames of war when she can attempt it with success. Although labouring under the burden of an unsupportable debt, and torn by factions contending for power, she never loses sight of the re-establishment of her navy.

Memorial of M. *de* VERGENNES, *to* LEWIS XVI., *on the English.*

CHAP. I.

Continuation of the Fourth Epoch, and of the History of the Establishment of Liberty in America.—Conduct of the House of Austria towards France, her Ally, while the latter Power was at War with England—First Advantage she took of the Alliance in 1756, and of our Situation.—Austria endeavours to establish herself with Impunity in Bavaria.

THE first administration of Mr. Necker having happened between the time of the establishment of liberty in America, in 1774, and the peace of 1783, which confirmed it, chronological order requires that our account of that administration should be placed in the middle of the American war. We now continue the history of that war; and considering its first effects on the continent, relative to the peace of Europe, and the interests of our country, the conduct of the house of Austria claims our earliest attention.

Scarcely had the first harbingers of war between France and England menaced us with that scourge, when the Austrian party held forth the importance of the treaty of alliance made in 1756 to the interest of France. "Do you observe," said the friends of the queen,

who were acquainted with the interests of the two nations, "what France gains by her treaty with the court of Vienna: she deprives England of an ancient ally on the continent, capable of dividing her force and resources; she condemns this insulated power to remain alone in the bosom of the waters, without the least influence on the continent; and this treaty has not only procured us, for sixteen years past, a certain peace, but France at this time is on the point of reaping the fruits of it, by an amicable and beneficent neutrality."

The views of the court of Vienna were very opposite. It was in hopes of gaining by our embarrassment the advantages which are derived from the most signal victories, without striking a blow. Joseph II. began by coming himself to reconnoitre our position in 1777.

Maria Antoinetta, his sister, had already experienced, ever since her marriage, that the titled nobility were firm enough to repress the pretensions of Austria, which Maria Theresa had attempted to set up.

The archduke, her brother, found the princes of the blood resolved to withstand the honorary demands he made at court. These two cautions given to the house of Austria, by the principal nobility, and the princes of the blood, were lessons for Joseph II. He therefore arrived at

court, and appeared in our provinces, with the most studied air of modesty. Prompted by a plan of policy which he would not confide to extraordinary envoys, or embassadors, he came to Versailles under the title of count Falkenstein, and found the king well grounded by M. de Vergennes in the universality of his possible propositions.

It has been said, that Lewis XVI. promised him at this time the opening of the Scheld, and the establishment of an archduke at Cologne, on condition that he should destroy the fortresses of the Low Countries, Ostend and some others excepted. We are authorised to believe, that the king gave him to understand he should not be insensible to his friendship during the war with England, if circumstances rendered it necessary.

The court of Vienna was no sooner informed of the dispositions of the cabinets of Versailles and London, and of the facts which announced an approaching war, than it resolved to take advantage of the moment to ameliorate its situation; and with this design Joseph wished previously to sound our minds, and examine our strength and resources. He was seen in company with our ministers and administrators, and insinuated himself into the interior of provinces. He visited our manufactories, our commercial

cities, our ports, and canals; but his politeness and attention to the artists, and the chiefs of the charitable establishments or offices of public utility, could not do away the uneasiness and national suspicion he occasioned, resulting from the curiosity and jealous inquietude which he was unable to conceal. Joseph, besides, only found objects in France calculated to excite his resentment and regret. On the south was Spain, one of the most beautiful countries of Europe, which we had torn from his ancestors, as well as the valuable province of Roussillon. The two provinces of Burgundy to the east, Alsace and Lorraine to the north-east, and a part of the Low Countries to the north, were only branches lopped from the inheritance of Charles V. The emperor's states were composed of fragments and pieces cemented together. France, on the contrary, was compact, without the least separation. Joseph entered France from curiosity, he quitted it burning with jealousy and ambition, which was not long in discovering itself.

Europe, in effect, was informed all at once of the illness and death of the elector of Bavaria, and the sudden resolution of Joseph II. to seize upon this electorate, so long coveted by his ancestors.

Bavaria offered the emperor some useful com-

munications with his possessions to the south and east. Once united to the domains of Austria, the Danube would no longer cease to flow on her shores. By this operation Joseph prevented the union of Bavaria to the palatinate under the same prince, observing the ancient policy of his house by dividing the fiefs of the empire or seizing on them. An after-thought gave him hopes of being able to annihilate, some time or other, the duchy of Wirtemberg, and thus, arrived at the Rhine, to reach France, and, in case of war, to exercise his rights on Alsace, or even on Lorraine, the ancient possession of his ancestors. Frederic II. denounced these vast projects of the emperor to all the world, by means of his agents.

It was the interest of Europe not to suffer that prince to establish himself in a post of such a nature. The emperor, once master of Bavaria, might fall unexpectedly on Turin, France, and Alsace; and, in Germany, on all the powers bordering on the electorate. By this acquisition he would be able to oppose to France that unity and territorial indivisibility which give us such a preponderating relative force. By a sudden manœuvre he remedied the weakness of his possessions, which wanted combination, being intersected by a great number of

different sovereignties, incorporated in the heart of his dominions.

However convenient this military operation might be to the emperor, it was not approved by Maria Theresa. That princess, now growing old, was environed by casuists, priests, and a confessor; her conscience still reproached her with iniquities committed in Poland, when she pillaged a free country, and seized upon a part of the sovereignty of a defenceless and friendly power. Her confessors represented to her, that, from no other motive than to enlarge her dominions, she was now on the point of oppressing her people, and murdering millions of Germans, for whom she must answer before God. Moved by the dictates of conscience, and tired with her fruitless military expeditions against Frederic, she begged her son to reign in peace, and suffer the succession of Bavaria to pass to its lawful heirs; but Joseph had made it a point of honour, and the more his mother remonstrated, the more obstinately were her arguments opposed. An opportunity to aggrandise himself had arrived; his sister could ward off the resentment of France, and the Turks would engage the attention of Catharine II. Having therefore only Frederic to contend with, he resolved to set him at defi-

ance, and take advantage of so many favourable circumstances to accomplish his desires. Prince Kaunitz, who had both the mother and son to please, sure of the former, and obliged to bend to the resolution of the prince, applauded his proceedings. An army is put in motion to enter Bavaria. The elector palatine, its legitimate heir, struck with terror at the arrival of the troops, gave up to Austria, by a treaty concluded between the emperor and him at Munich, two thirds of the electorate.

The advantages which Austria proposed to draw from Bavaria, and the interests which this union involved, awakened the attention of Europe.

The cabinet of Versailles, who were not ignorant of the queen's passion for the aggrandisement of her family, found themselves restrained under the eyes of that princess. They resolved, therefore, to look on, hear all, and temporise; but to do every thing in secret, to counteract an operation which drew nearer to France a natural enemy, so dreaded in former times. The present alliance, a work of convenience, and the king's marriage with an archduchess, could not endure for ever, while the interests of the nation were attached to the preservation of its situation relative to the Austrian power. Count de Vergennes repre-

sented to Lewis XVI. the interests of his house in this respect, and there was no difficulty in persuading the prince to hold a private correspondence with him, in writing, on the conduct of the queen and emperor.

"With the ordinary interceptions, sir, I return the Spanish dispatches which you transmitted to me. We must expect the ill-humour of the Spanish minister, when he perceives that we are better acquainted with events which are to happen than he is. But it is a pity that the circumstance should make matters worse. M. d'Aranda is very indiscreet, to plague us with his resentment against his country. I approve M. Montmorin's project for your writing immediately to M. Florida Biancha; you have only to prepare the letter, which you will read in a committee, where we will make the necessary determinations on ulterior operations.

"I have seen the queen since she saw you. She appeared to me much affected with the idea of a war's breaking out between two rivals so near each other. She talked to me also of your not having done enough to prevent it. I endeavoured to prove to her, that you had tried every thing in your power, and that we were ready to take any amicable steps that the court of Vienna might suggest to us.

But at the same time I did not fail to inform her, how little I thought of the acquisitions of the house of Austria, and that we were in no way obliged to lend it any assistance for their protection; and, moreover, I particularly assured her, that the king of Prussia could not induce us to break the alliance, and that we might disapprove of the conduct of an ally without quarreling with him. She had heard very little from the emperor and empress, or from M. de Mercy. This is for your information, in order that you may speak the same language. I think, like you, that we must not by any means sanction the usurpation of the court of Vienna, and I see no impropriety in what you have said to M. de Mercy.

(Signed) "LEWIS."

This letter, in which we find so much mystery, so many unknown facts, and the king's true character, is a most faithful picture of the connexion between France and the court of Vienna.

Russia could not view with pleasure this augmentation of the emperor's forces. Fearless of attack on the northern side, Austria is the only power to the south which it is her interest to watch; she ought, therefore, to prevent the aggrandisement of her territory. But Catha-

rine's resources were drained to support her splendor, and the war against the Ottoman Porte, which Joseph had excited, to take off her attention from his proceedings in Bavaria. Catharine, thus employed, looked on in silence; and waited for the developement of his policy with wary expectation.

The king of Sardinia, terrified at the approach of Austria towards his possessions, at the same time that he was so much embarrassed in the east and south, made strong remonstrances. He solicited France, Russia, and particularly Prussia, in very impressive terms, to prevent the usurpation of Bavaria; but the secret transactions of the sisters-in-law of Lewis XVI. were not calculated to reconcile them to Maria Antoinetta.

Saxony, uneasy at the approach of Austria, put herself under the protection of Prussia, and implored Frederic to deliver them from so dangerous a neighbour.

The duke of Deux-Ponts, legitimate successor of the elector palatine, deprived of Bavaria by the treaty of Munich, united his particular claims to the preceding ones.

There was not a state in Europe, therefore, uninterested in the suppression of this proceeding of the court of Vienna; and such was the importance of Bavaria, that all Europe, who had tolerated, without interference, the dismember-

ment of Poland, now awoke from their lethargy, incensed at the pretensions of Joseph II., and at his unbounded ambition.

While Russia and France were coming to an explanation, Frederic II., at the head of his armies, commenced a negotiation. Relying on the adhesion of so many secondary powers of the Germanic body to the common cause, he had nothing to fear but the decisions and steps of the former powers. Frederic caused the opinions of M. de Vergennes to be sounded, who yet only explained himself in ambiguous or general terms. The French minister constantly refused to depart from the watchful uncertainty in which he affected to hold himself, and would go no farther than disapproving the project of the emperor; but he assured the king of Prussia, that France, on this occasion, would not lend any assistance to the house of Austria.

Satisfied with these overtures, and with the impotence of Maria Theresa, Frederic had only to be guarded against Russia. She continued a mere spectator, alleging her embarrassment with the Turks. Under these circumstances, almost sure of France and Catharine, he took the resolution to develope his character of protector of the liberties and independence of the Germanic bodies. Austria pushed on her

troops into Bohemia; and Frederic opposed to them a hundred and sixty thousand men, in two divisions.

France, occupied with the war of America, had to fear that its flames might extend to the continent. At Berlin, she disapproved of the conduct of Joseph II.; at Vienna, she advised him to desist from his intentions on Bavaria: but Joseph took advantage of his opportunities to pursue his plans with redoubled vigour. In the mean time, baron Thugut arrived in Frederic's camp, on the part of the emperor; he offered the king of Prussia some insignificant principalities and reparations, which were not accepted. Thugut, thus repulsed, went to Vienna, and returned again to Frederic, who still remained firm in his character of protector of the integral parts of the Germanic possessions. A peace was now negotiated by M. de Vergennes, then a favourite at Constantinople, between the Porte and Russia. Prussia united herself to his solicitations; and, as she consented to acknowledge the independence of the khan of Tartary, Russia, delivered from that enemy, developed her national character in the contest with Austria, and insisted that Maria Theresa and the emperor should give satisfaction to the princes of the empire, or she would assist the king of

Prussia in the present discussions, to accomplish the terms of his treaties. Astonished, but not yet reclaimed, Joseph answered the threats of Russia with another corps of eighty thousand men; while Maria Theresa, ever averse to the military ambition of her son, renewed her entreaties at Petersburg and Versailles, and requested the mediation of their cabinets. The baron de Breteuil presented a plan of a treaty to the court of Vienna, which had been concerted between France and Prussia. Maria Theresa having demanded a suspension of hostilities, and Russia, on her part, having signed the treaty with the Porte, the emperor and Prussia, through the mediation of France and Catharine II., concluded the treaty of Teschen.

Joseph, now perceiving that the friendship of France was not sufficient, formed a plan respecting the court of Petersburg, and made preparations for a journey to Russia, to come to an understanding with Catharine II.

CHAP. II.

Second Advantage which the House of Austria took of our Embarrassments in the American War: she establishes an Archduke, in full Sovereignty, in the Electorate of Cologne.

THE emperor soon manifested his ever-increasing ambition. While France was exerting all her efforts against England, Austria, her ally, seized the opportunity to raise her archduke Maximilian to the electorate of Cologne. By this arrangement, Joseph contrived to place his brother in full sovereignty close to our gates. All the interests of France were opposite to this election, and those of Austria were strongly combined with the establishment of the grand-duke at this conjuncture. What she would not have dared to attempt at another time, she contrived to put in execution during our embarrassments with the war, and established in power a new branch of her house. Although it was constitutionally elective, the house of Austria had so often metamorphosed the temporary possession of sovereignties into right of inheritance, that the election of Maximilian was equivalent to the plenitude of supreme power.

Secondly, in what situation did she place this new power? Even close to the French territory; in a situation that allowed the emperor to encamp any number of men in the most advantageous positions for attack, as well as for defence; which would oblige France, in time of war, to establish an equivalent army in that quarter.

In the third place, Joseph II. augmented against us his preponderance of patronage and influence on the catholic powers of the empire; he had created a new viceroy, rich, powerful, and happy, in military positions, instead of an ecclesiastical prince, naturally neuter.

In fine, he had established at Cologne a sovereign governed by such ambitious views as daily became more prejudicial to our interests. The archduke was scarcely instituted to his electorate, when he began to exercise a spirit of monopoly on the surrounding sovereignties; insomuch that, in a short time, he became grand-master of the Teutonic order, archbishop elector of Cologne, bishop of Munster, &c. &c.

The king of Prussia, less interested than France in opposing this grand acquisition, on account of his geographical and relative positions, could not help feeling how much that country had neglected its welfare; but regarding the measure as agreed to by the court of

Versailles and the empress of Russia, he did no more than threaten a few of the electoral chapters, if they continued to invest Maximilian with so many mitres. The monopoly of sovereignties was stopped. Joseph had now contrived an interview with the czarina, who wrote to the chapter of Munster to remain neuter; while the king of Prussia termed the archduke's election, the establishment of a young eagle.

Before we speak of the arrangements between Joseph and Catharine, it is necessary to mention his offers to Lewis XVI.

CHAP. III.

Baron Thugut's secret Mission to the Court of France—Character of that Personage—Secret Causes of his Elevation—He becomes Clerk to our Ministers for Foreign Affairs, to the Dukes of Choiseul, d'Aiguillon, Count de Vergennes, and to our Embassadors.—Particular Instructions of Lewis XVI. to M. de Vergennes on the Conduct he is to observe towards Thugut.—Conduct of Lewis XV. in this Respect.—Thugut's Venality—His Elevation to the Administration is the Result of it—He comes to propose to M. de Vergennes a Confederacy with the Turks against Catharine II., during the American War.—Treacherous and romantic Plan of the House of Austria on this Occasion.

IN the reign of Lewis XV., under the administration of M. de Choiseul, baron Thugut was secretly bought by France. His cyphers and instructions, and the orders he received from Maria Theresa, were known to our embassadors. Lewis XV. had been very exact in paying him in the first place a salary of 60,000 livres, and afterwards some particular recompence for each important service.

At the death of that monarch, Thugut was terrified at the approaching disgrace of the duke of Aiguillon and his party, and the probable elevation of the credit of Maria Antoinetta. He

calculated, that the Austrian embassador, who had private instructions relative to that princess as dauphiness, would have the same now she was become queen of France, and that he might acquire the secret influence which he did not fail to obtain. He calculated, that the young queen would subjugate a prince naturally of a pliable character, and who was become so sensible to the caresses of his wife. Then it would be the duty of the new favourite, whether a French courtier, a simple clerk, or a minister for foreign affairs, promoted by the queen of France, or dependent on a princess who wished to govern us, to expose the villany of baron Thugut, and inform her, that this agent of the house of Austria had persuaded the duke of Aiguillon that she was still an archduchess, and not dauphiness of France. Under the impulse of terror, therefore, Thugut dispatched an agent to France, to concert measures with the new minister *.

Fortunately for Thugut, the new minister, M. de Vergennes, was possessed of principles inimical to Austria. The king, well instructed by his father and aunts, had given the administration of exterior policy to the wisest partisan

* The king's choice of M. de Vergennes was not then known. He was embassador at the court of Sweden when he was called to the administration.

of the ancient French ministry; to a minister who had received a public order to respect the treaties of 1756 and 1758, and the secret order to repress the advantages which the court of Vienna might take of this alliance. Such a choice rendered the character and treachery of Thugut still necessary to France. The count de Vergennes had, besides, been very intimately connected with him as internuncio at Constantinople, and found himself afterwards interested in forwarding his elevation, above all to continue him in his antecedent employment, and mentioned it to Lewis XVI. The young prince had reigned five months, and was nineteen years of age; he was at Fontainebleau, and M. de Vergennes at Versailles. The spontaneous answer of the king is a characteristic monument, that his ministers were not always so absolute as has been imagined in their departments. It has been carefully preserved with the other papers which I received in 1792 from the committee of inspection, to throw some light upon the history of our times; and it was found among the writings concealed from the queen, dated October 17, 1774.

"I have read, sir, the secret and very important dispatch of the chevalier de St. Priest," said Lewis; "and I am not ignorant of baron Thugut's services, although I have not been

made acquainted with particulars. I shall keep him on the same footing as the late king did. But the method which St. Priest proposes cannot be adopted if he remain in France. What inconvenience would there be in letting him go to Vienna? I know it is not agreeable to him; but I am almost certain they know nothing of him in that city. Perhaps he may not be able to get any employment in the government; but he may then travel, and come to settle in France, where he will be safe. And, besides, as I do not believe him to be an Austrian, nor even a subject of the empress, that measure will not be difficult.

"I do not think that prince Kaunitz torments him with his negotiation of temporising declarations, or there would be a possibility of his misrepresenting them, and throwing the blame upon the dragomans who had not well understood him. There is no good reason for his return by sea: when he arrives in France, if the queen endeavours to procure him an employment, not being in the secret, she cannot give any reasons to the empress, particularly to prevent his return to Vienna, that he may fix himself in France: accordingly it will be perceived, that it is our cabinet which puts him forward; and, if there has ever been the least suspicion of him, it will be discovered.

Prince Kaunitz will compare the orders he has given him with the manner in which he has executed them. I remember that M. d'Aiguillon informed me, the late king had caused the internuncio (Thugut) to be told, that if his treachery were discovered, he would not give him a retreat in France, but a pension to live where he wished. If the plot were found out, the king of Prussia would not fail to involve us in a quarrel with Vienna *; and he would have reason to speak of the little intrigues the court of France made use of, in showing that we had not acted with good faith towards Austria; and, at the moment the latter power is about to unite with us, it is very essential to keep on good terms. If we wish to employ Thugut, it will be easy for him, as I am persuaded he was not born a subject of the empress, to ask for his dismissal, on account of health; then he may come into France and enjoy the fruits of his labours, and, perhaps, he may even bring with him a recommendation from the court of Vienna. This is what I think on the subject, in order to avoid inconveniences.

"The letters you will herewith receive, prove the confidence they have in him, and that he is

* The dismemberment of Poland made Joseph II. and Frederic, king of Prussia, temporary friends.

not in the least suspected. Next year, when the affairs of Poland shall be terminated, and the views of the house of Austria accomplished, when there will be no reason to revert to past circumstances, when the coparcenary courts shall be at war among themselves, Vienna, wishing to cultivate our friendship, will not be very ready to trouble any one they may suspect of being attached to us. You may send him word, that baron de Breteuil will protect him indirectly, and provide him with the means of evasion in case he be suspected.

" Prince Kaunitz's policy is very incomprehensible. The more I see, the less I understand it. By Thugut's account it appears, that he imagines himself absolutely in alliance with Russia, and that he has not contributed to the treaty of peace; at least, he has not approved of it. On the other side, he informs us that he fears the consequences of it, and the emperor has come to an explanation with the abbé Georgel thereon *. We must thence conclude that his policy is, to agree with every one for his own interest. We have him safe, by an excellent treaty; and if he want any thing of us, he must wait till he explain himself, and till we see some advantage therein; for there is nothing to be feared from

* Secretary to prince Lewis de Rohan, then embassador from the court of Vienna to France, and since cardinal.

remaining quiet, and, above all, mistrusting the good offices of the king of Prussia.

"As for the chevalier de St. Priest, it is absolutely necessary for him to remain where he is; he is too useful to be suffered to return. M. Gerard must answer him amicably on the subject, as they correspond, without seeming to have communicated his letter to you: but let him do away every idea of his return; let him say, that he thinks he has perceived, by what you had previously expressed, that his services please me; that no one can be so useful to the state as himself under the present circumstances, and that he will meet with a recompence equal to his deserts, when he shall have remained there a necessary time. On your part, repeat to him, that it is impossible for me to be more satisfied with his exertions, and that there cannot be a finer opportunity for him to be useful to me; that it is in his power to collect the fragments of an edifice nearly falling to decay, and that he is able to raise it from the dust; that you are sensible the task is difficult; but with the talents and courage which you know he possesses, he will be more likely to succeed than any other, and that he will reap all the glory. You will enter into details of our commerce; and remark to him, that on his vigilance will depend either its

ruin, or the certainty of its returning to the state more flourishing than ever, as the opening of the Black Sea will prove. In fine, you must praise his foresight, in opposing the Catholic to the Greek rites; you will add, that nothing could be more agreeable to me, and that I exhort him to continue it.

(Signed) "LEWIS."

Baron Thugut, whom you observe in danger, on the point of being prosecuted as a traitor, if his conduct were discovered, and exposed from that moment to wander, without a home, deprived of an asylum in Europe, and even in France, which he had served at the expence of Maria Theresa; this ambiguous personage, whose country even was not then known in France, was assisted in his advancement by M. de Vergennes. He ascended the various steps of fortune, and attained, by his perfidy, to the place which Kaunitz procured by his creative genius and fidelity. Likewise, when France altered her policy, and the weakness of the king was exposed, Thugut had no other resource than selling himself to the court of England, for the execution of the continental plan against France

* The tears which Thugut has caused to flow, in concert with Mr. Pitt, in whose fate he now participates; the human

Such is the personage which Joseph II. had sent on a secret errand to M. de Vergennes; but the alliance and new connexions which he proposed between France and America, against the court of Petersburg, particularly during the American war, were so romantic, that it is not surprising de Vergennes denied him the principal object of his mission. Russia had an ancient plan against the Turks; she was mustering all her resources to put it in execution; and Joseph II., far from being inclined to become our ally against Catharine, shortly after joined her against the Turks, to the prejudice of our dearest interests.

blood which they have wantonly spilled, and the incalculable evils which this scourge of France and Austria has brought on the two nations, are of such a nature, that there is not a good Frenchman, Austrian, or even a true Englishman, but must desire to see that minister reduced to the situation which the young Lewis XVI. seemed to have foreseen in 1774. Ministers whom nature has made mischievous and hateful, and who are ruined by peace, never fail to exert themselves in secret, as we have seen in these Memoirs, to promote future wars. The hatred of Thugut against republican France was so profound, and his devotion to Mr. Pitt so steady, that he was one of the first to tear the treaty of Campo Formio, so generously concluded when our troops were directing their march towards the capital of the Austrian monarchy. Bonaparte signed a treaty of peace, and Thugut was forming another coalition against us. He will not have the power at present to tear the treaty of Lunéville, where the two nations have the happiness to be exerting themselves for a general peace.

CHAP. IV.

Third Advantage which Joseph II. took of our Alliance—He joins the Russians against the Turks, our Allies—He attempts to deprive us of the Advantages of the Coalition with Spain against England, during the American War.—Recapitulation of Proofs of the Treachery of the Alliance of 1756.—Lewis XVI.'s Opinions on the Emperor.—Continuation of the King's Letters to M. de Vergennes—That Prince's Character developed.

THE offers made by Joseph II. to the court of France, by baron Thugut, for a coalition against the projects of Catharine II., were so illusory, that not long afterwards he exhibited manifest signs of devotion to that princess. He possessed an imagination extremely irregular, he was in the highest degree ambitious, and his capricious and changeable mind would abandon an enterprise as easily as he had conceived it. There was not a power in Europe, bordering on his sovereignties, against which he had not formed some project of invasion. He had extended his dominions in the north, to the prejudice of Stanislaus I. In the south, he had attempted to ravish Friuli from the Venetians; he had promised himself

the possession of Bavaria; and he had established his brother in an electorate.

Now, as he could not succeed in his coalition against Catharine, nor procure any concession in virtue of this new alliance, he courted the friendship of that princess, to dismember with her the Ottoman empire. It was with justice, therefore, that he was called an enemy to the repose of his neighbours, as well as to that of his subjects, whom he never ceased to torment with reforms. Before the death of his mother, he passed for an equitable, wise, and prudent prince: after that event, he obtained the character of a rash and turbulent sovereign, under the influence of mistaken principles. The union of France and Spain, so natural to those countries during the American war, gave him a secret uneasiness, which carried him to a singular excess of imprudence. Foreseeing, from the beginning of the contest, that the coalition between France, Spain, Holland, and the insurgents, would be fatal to England, he was accused of having attempted to seduce Spain by the bait of England's ceding Gibraltar to her, if she would conclude a separate peace with the court of London; an offer which Don Carlos rejected with all the pride and loyalty of a Castilian monarch.

Again repulsed, the emperor declared war

against the Turks, in concert with Catharine II., who had conceived the design of seizing on the Crimea. Joseph supported this usurpation with a formidable army; and France, swayed by the intrigues of Maria Antoinetta, and tired of the war with America, was obliged to sanction it.

Lewis XVI., who detested Joseph, could not help observing, this time, that his brother-in-law embraced every party in Europe that declared against us. It was the interest of France to support the Turks; and Joseph concurred in dismembering the Ottoman empire. France had continually granted her protection to each of the sovereignties of the Germanic body, and maintained their independence; and Joseph designed to seize on Bavaria. We were at war with the English; and he attempted to detach from us Spain, our ally. If France has since manifested so much resentment against Maria Antoinetta, and against the alliance of 1756, these were the remote causes of the enmity. Convinced of the illusion of the alliance, Lewis at length testified his dissatisfaction.

From the commencement of his reign he had known the character of Joseph II.; and spoke of him to M. de Vergennes, April 11, 1775, in these terms:

"I transmit you, sir, the dispatch of M. de St. Priest,

" I cannot imagine that the house of Austria is acquainted with its own interests, in not wishing to demand the liberty of commerce in the Black Sea; every step which the court of Vienna has lately taken is very obscure and delusive. I believe it to be embarrassed with its late usurpations in Moldavia, not knowing how to adjudge them. Russia disapproves of it, and the Porte will never consent to cede them to the emperor. I think nothing of the new agreement of the coparcenary courts. I rather suppose them to be watching and suspecting each other: in which opinion I am confirmed by M. de Lauzun. I see no reason for the emperor's invasion of the state of Venice; but the laws of the most powerful are always the best. It sufficiently denotes the ambitious and despotic character of the emperor, which he could not conceal from the baron de Breteuil. We must believe that he had absolutely fascinated the eyes of his mother; for all his usurpations were contrary to her opinion, and she had repeatedly declared so from the beginning. The dispatch which baron Thugut has received, shows, that prince Kaunitz disapproves of his proceedings, and is obliged to act against his will. It is surely from Lascy. We have nothing to do at this moment but look on, and be well guarded

against what may happen from Vienna. Uprightness and circumspection must be our measures. But St. Priest may still sound the dispositions at Constantinople, on the free navigation of the Black Sea. I am much mistaken if the three courts do not, in the end, fall out among themselves;—then what will happen!

(Signed) "LEWIS."

M. de Vergennes declared his sentiments without restraint, in his secret correspondence with the king, on the alliance of 1756. A few days before the emperor's arrival in France, he advised his majesty to be on his guard against the insinuations of that prince, and expresses himself, in a letter dated April 12, 1777, as follows:

"If the emperor's journey into France be with a political view, he can only propose to himself two objects; the one, to engage your majesty to draw closer your alliance with the house of Austria; and the other, to dispose you to consent, either gratuitously or on consideration of certain equivalents, to the plans of aggrandisement which he may wish to form at the expence of the Turks.

"On these two hypotheses we have to reflect;

and we consider it our duty to instruct your majesty upon the subject.

" As to the first, we cannot avoid representing, that this alliance (good in itself, as far as it relates to the greater security of the maintenance of public tranquillity) is of no other advantage to France, than what might have been obtained from a well consolidated treaty of peace, executed in good faith by the respective parties. We have only to take a survey of the topographical situation of the principal powers of Europe, to be convinced, that none of them, except Austria, can have any interest or possibility of making war against your majesty on the continent.

" England, the inveterate enemy of this monarchy, is, in herself, insufficient for this enterprise: the states-general are far beneath the possibility of conceiving the design; their nullity is evident. The king of Prussia is the most likely; but, suspicious of the house of Austria, which he can only regard as an enemy forcibly reconciled, he will not embark without provocation in the invasion of your majesty's dominions, as he could not defend them, but at the risk of exposing his own. Besides, he could not enter France without infringing upon the Austrian territory."

CHAP. XII.

Lewis XVI. follows the Example of his Predecessor, and abandons the Cares and Execution of Government to his Ministers.—Henry IV. and Lewis XIV. were, on the contrary, principal Managers of Public Affairs.—Marshal Broglio, the Prince of Luxembourg, Count d'Angiville, and Count Grimoard, transmit Memorials to the King on the Administration.—Memorial of the former, on Maëstricht, read in the Council.—His Secret Mission into Holland.

THE exclusive confidence which Lewis XVI. granted to his ministers is one of the principal errors of his reign. Under Lewis XIV., the prince commanded, and ministers executed. The unity of that monarch's views gave his reign that appearance of grandeur and regularity for which it is remarkable.

Under Lewis XV., the carelessness of the prince, his dislike to business, and the succession of so great a number of ministers, without general method or general system, were the principal faults and vices of that reign.

Lewis XVI., instead of carrying back authority to its source, as under Lewis XIV. and Henry IV., left it, as he had found it, in the hands of ministers, who united plans of government with their execution: the king merely

gave his private or tacit sanction; so that the administration was subversive of that under Turgot; it overturned, in a moment, the constitution under the archbishop of Toulouse; and, under Necker, ruined both the administration and social order. In these different epochs of the history of Lewis XVI., the monarch is no where to be seen; while the views, misfortunes, or talents of ministers, were visible in every operation.

The king, however, did not refuse the advice of well-informed persons, who presented memorials on state affairs. A cabinet of the small apartments at Versailles was full of writings, containing all sorts of projects, plans, and observations. Among the rest, was that of the chevalier or prince of Luxembourg, who had served in the navy, and had collected great information relative to the fleets, colonies, and exterior commerce: there were also some presented by marshal Broglio, and divers ministers and generals. The director of buildings, count d'Angiville, connected with Messrs. de Vergennes and de Calonne, which caused him to be suspected by the queen, had likewise remitted a great number of memorials; some of them tending to support the operations of those two ministers. I likewise distinguished a heap of count Grimoard's memorials, which, upon

the whole, announce, that this young soldier was playing a part equally secret and important. Informed, undoubtedly, of the weakness of the king's will, he frequently transmitted his labours to the ministers. It appears certain, however, that these memorials had been read in the council, by the marginal notes which appeared in them; and that count Grimoard, the author, as well as his cousin, the chevalier Grimoard, had attracted the attention of Lewis XVI., to whom they had been presented *.

The house of Austria having formed pretensions against the Dutch, extremely prejudicial to our interests, demanded the cession of Maëstricht, as an inducement for her to desist from hostilities. The king's ministers fearing to

* The latter was a captain in the navy, who had rendered himself conspicuous during the American war by some very brilliant exploits. This brave seaman was condemned by the revolutionary criminal tribunal of Rochefort, during the mission of Lequinio, leaving an illustrious name in the history of the war of 1778. The king preserved, in a separate packet, the particulars of his engagements with the English, and an authentic diploma of the aggregation of their family to French nobility in 1318, under Philip Lebel, extracted by his majesty's order from the register of the chamber of accounts; together with sufficient proofs, that they belonged to a family who held the principality of Malta. Lewis XVI., like his predecessor, had a prodigious memory; he knew an infinity of historical facts relating to ancient families. His private library was filled with the history of the court, and naval and military transactions.

kindle the flames of war, were inclined to give up that place rather than expose themselves to a quarrel with the emperor. And if we consider how much influence Maria Antoinetta possessed at the moment, we may be able to judge what great inconvenience a war would have occasioned under such circumstances. A memorial, composed by the count Grimoard, which we shall lay before our readers, was read in the council of state, in the month of January 1785, (as we are informed by a marginal note in the king's hand-writing,) which determined government not to cede Maestricht, but to support a war in case it should become unavoidable.

The following is a copy of that important memorial:

" It may at first sight appear a matter of indifference to France, whether the emperor become possessed of Maestricht or not; but, if we consider attentively the importance of that place, we shall be convinced, that the king has the strongest interest in not giving it another master.

" Since a brother of the emperor is made elector of Cologne, he has a greater opportunity than he had formerly of extending his arms to the Low Countries; because his troops, arriving from the hereditary states into the electorate, will find reinforcements and provisions, and

consequently the means of shortening the distance between the Rhine and the Meuse, and even to come to action there, in case of necessity. In either event, he will establish his principal magazines at Bonn, Cologne, and Neuss. But, not having Maestricht, if he wish to carry on a war in the Low Countries, he must experience very great inconvenience from the want of a fortress on the Meuse, capable of securing his grand magazine; for Ruremonde and Venlo, which he might easily take from the Dutch, cannot be considered as strongly fortified places. Hence it results, that the Austrian monarch must meet with the greatest obstacles to his establishment on the Meuse, the navigation of which Maestricht would continually impede, even if the place be blockaded on both sides of the river, which would require a numerous corps of troops, if the Dutch were not in alliance with the court of Vienna, a circumstance at present not very probable.

"Namur, although situated on the Meuse, is not of much importance to the emperor, except in the event of a campaign; as that place is too distant from the electorate of Cologne, and because Maestricht cuts off all connexion between them. It is therefore evident, that, by admitting an alliance between France and Holland, if the emperor persist in making war on

the Low Countries, he will be obliged to begin with the siege of Maestricht, (to him attended with the greatest difficulties,) in order not to expose himself to losses, which it would be almost impossible for him to repair, on account of his great distance from the hereditary states.

In the event of war, it is probable that France will begin by seizing on Charleroy, and repair the fortifications, in order to secure the course of the Sambre, and thereby convey to Namur a part of the stores necessary for the siege of that place, while the remainder would be sent by the Meuse. The siege of Namur might be supposed difficult in the face of an imperial army, if marshal Luxembourg had not demonstrated, in 1692, that, on the Mehaigne, in front of the place, there are positions sufficiently advantageous to cover the siege, and leave nothing to fear from an engagement. Namur taken, and Maestricht in the possession of France, or her allies, they will be soon masters of Huy and Liege; and the emperor, having no post on the Meuse to establish his magazines, and insure his communication with Cologne, will be reduced to abandon the Low Countries, and to retire between the Meuse and the Rhine, where it may be presumed he cannot remain long, as a protracted or undecisive war would prove his ruin. He must then repass the Rhine,

or march on the Moselle. In this supposition, the operations of marshal Créqui, in 1677, indicate the means, even with unequal forces, to oblige the Austrians to retreat from Lower Alsace; and the campaign of marshal Turenne in 1674, points out to us expedients to prevent the Germans, although they have a superior army to ours, from penetrating into that province, or at least from keeping firm footing in it; which is still more practicable at the present day, as we are now possessed of Strasburg; besides, the emperor cannot carry on the war on the Moselle, and at Luxembourg, before he have collected a sufficient quantity of ammunition, provisions, and forage. The purchase of these necessaries, which he must procure from the empire, will cost him more than he is able to spare, particularly if the war should be protracted. With regard to the sterile country of Luxembourg, that can scarcely supply the wants of its inhabitants, it will afford no resource to an army like those which take the field in these modern times; and is one of the reasons that prevented the house of Austria from attacking France from that quarter, in the different wars we have supported against it.

"What we have said, proves that France has nothing to fear from the emperor on the Moselle, provided the French army be well con-

ducted; and if he have not Maestricht he cannot support the war in the Low Countries; but, if he be put in possession of that important place, he may penetrate into France by the Meuse, where he will act with so much the more effect, as that frontier *is absolutely without defence* *.

" The possession of Maestricht and Namur, which will be followed by that of Liege and Huy, secures the emperor a communication with Cologne, gives him a menacing position on the frontier between the Moselle and the Meuse, and enables him to support the war for a greater length of time in the Low Countries, against France and Holland, with every advantage which a central position can give him.

" † ' But as we cannot suppose that the Aus-
' trian monarch, whose interests, from the weak-
' ness of his finances, must be not to prolong
' the war, is so ill-advised as to imitate the ex-
' ample of the allies in 1700, by throwing away
' his time and resources against our towns in
' Flanders, the barrier of which is too strong to
' be broken; it is to be presumed that he will not
' hesitate in penetrating between the Meuse

* For the words in italic, which are struck out, the following are substituted: *does not appear sufficiently guarded.*

† The lines between commas was not communicated to the Dutch embassador.

'and the Moselle. He may pass the Meuse at 'Namur, occupy Dinant, put it in a state of 'defence, mask Givet and Charlemont by a 'corps posted to the right of the river, and fall 'back on Sedan, which is not in a state of de- 'fence, take possession of it, repair it, make it 'his general depository of arms, throw ammu- 'nition and provisions into it from Cologne, 'the transportation of which would be well de- 'fended by the Meuse, the places built on that 'river, and by the troops that occupy the banks 'to the right; he would, moreover, have the 'power of drawing resources from the Low 'Countries, and leave behind him a great extent 'of country, which constitutes the object of the 'war. The imperial army thus well provided 'for, defended in the rear, and passing the Meuse 'to Sedan, would besiege Mezieres and Ro- 'croy, which places could not hold out after 'the trenches were opened against them, and so 'penetrate into the kingdom. Undoubtedly the 'French would attempt to prevent it, by posting 'themselves on some advantageous situation be- 'hind the Aisne; yet, if they should lose one or 'two battles, if the war were unsuccessful, or if 'the enemy should not be unskilful enough to try 'to force the passage of that river, but leaving 'it to the right, should continue their route to 'Château-Porcien, and then directly to Sois-

'sons, the French must descend the Aisne, and 'post themselves behind that town; supposing 'they were obliged to form a very extensive 'demi-circle, on account of the river, they 'might there stop the emperor's progress, who 'would have the nearest way to pass. But if 'the king's army should not be beforehand with 'the Austrians at Soissons, and the latter should 'pass the Aisne at that place, they might easily 'push on to the gates of Paris, and bring on the 'miseries which must result from such an in-'vasion.

"'The emperor thinks too much of his ag-'grandisement for us to suppose that his only 'object in demanding Maestricht from the Dutch 'is that of possessing one town more. It is 'probable, that, knowing the importance of 'that place, in case of a rupture with France, 'he will leave nothing undone to obtain it; 'and even, if Joseph had no other motive than 'his aggrandisement in Turkey, the possession 'of such a place would still be a very great ad-'vantage to him, by contributing to secure the 'Low Countries, or, at least, to give him an 'opportunity of returning to them after having 'plundered the Turks.'

"Several military men are of opinion, that the course of the Lis will always give France a free communication with the United Pro-

vinces. This is an error which ought to be set right. A line of defence or communication is only good in proportion as it leaves behind it an extensive and fertile country. Now, the distance between the Lis and the sea is very inconsiderable; besides, on the other side Ghent we find the Scheld, which is very irregular, and of which the Austrians might take advantage to throw troops in the rear of the French, in order to disturb their communications; we then arrive at Anvers, belonging to the emperor, which the Dutch are not in a situation to besiege, particularly if an army should come to its relief. Below Anvers, the Scheld is too wide to be considered as a communication with the United Provinces. The branches of the sea which separate the islands of Zealand from the main land are in the same situation; besides, if the Austrians pass the Scheld below Ghent, and above the Lis, there is then no other communication left between the French and Dutch; and the former, falling back towards Ypres and Menin, will shortly be reduced to act on the defensive.

"The best communication between France and Holland must be therefore by the Meuse; without Maestricht the emperor has no certain communication with Cologne, which is his principal dependence; and, on the contrary, if he

obtain Maestricht, he becomes master of the navigation of the Meuse, and may not only resist with advantage the French and Dutch in the Low Countries, but also penetrate into France. Although these arguments are incontrovertible, yet it may appear necessary to add facts.

"When prince Frederic Henry of Orange besieged Maestricht in 1632, it was, in the first place, to deprive the Spaniards of the means of communicating freely with the electorate of Cologne and the other states of the catholic league, which furnished them with supplies; secondly, in order to open a communication with, and receive supplies from France, which, before that time, had no other means of sending them than by sea. When Lewis XIII. declared war against Spain in 1635, the prince of Orange, who was at Nimeguen with his army, advanced to Maestricht, where he joined that of marshals Chatillon and Brézé, who had marched forward on their side; and France and Holland derived the greatest advantages from that place during the war.

"When Lewis XIV. attacked the republic in 1672, as he had no other enemy to oppose, he neglected Maestricht, which he contented himself with blockading; but in 1673, the emperor and Spain having espoused the cause of

the Dutch, he no longer hesitated, by the advice of Turenne, Condé, and Louvois, to begin the campaign with the siege of Maestricht; the conquest of which alone protected the return of the army that evacuated Holland at the end of the year, and essentially contributed to the success of the following campaigns, till the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678; for Maestricht prevented, or continually embarrassed the communication between the empire and the Low Countries; so that the enemy, constantly superior in number, could only act with difficulty and loss; and, without the resources derived from Holland, their operations must have entirely ceased.

"During the war which commenced in 1688, and terminated in 1697 by the treaty of Ryswick, France constantly directed her principal force towards the Low Countries; and, in spite of the talents of marshal de Luxembourg, she could not gain any decisive advantages, because the enemy, by means of Maestricht and the course of the Meuse, received considerable succours from the empire. On the other hand, the French were obliged to have, almost continually, on the right bank of the Meuse, a body of troops, often numerous, to watch Liege, and cover the frontier between the river and the Moselle.

" In the war of succession it was the same, particularly in 1702, when the duke of Marlborough, making use of the advantages which Maestricht gave him, combined his operations in such a manner as to render the efforts of the duke of Burgundy and marshal Boufflers ineffectual, prevented them from taking a position on the Lower Meuse, forced them to fall back upon Nimeguen as far as Megen, and thus opened a passage to the Low Countries. 'But, 'fortunately for France, the allies mistook their 'interests so much, that they only once attempted '(in 1705) to enter the kingdom by the Moselle. 'Marshal de Villars occupied the camp of Sirik, 'and they retired. They did not conceive the 'idea of penetrating between the Meuse and 'the Moselle, and lost their time against the 'French barriers in Flanders, where they took a 'number of places, without being able to find 'a road to the capital.'

" During the campaigns of 1746 and 1747, the enemy, after the loss of the battles of Rocoux and Lauffeld, found a certain retreat under Maestricht, which rendered these victories of no effect.

" Every one knows that the investing and attack of Maestricht in 1748, by marshal Saxe, accelerated the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-

Chapelle; because the allies were convinced that an invasion of Holland would be the certain consequence of the fall of that place.

"'In short, it appears that France cannot 'consent to deliver up Maestricht to the em- 'peror, without being fully convinced that nei- 'ther he nor his successor will take advantage 'of our weakness between the Meuse and the 'Moselle, or of the bad state of our army, to 'declare war against us, penetrate into the 'kingdom, and force us to give up Alsace, and 'perhaps more, unless the king be determined 'to expend above two hundred millions for the 'construction of fortresses all the way from 'Maubeuge to Charlemont, independently of 'Philippeville, and also from Givet to Thionville; 'for Rocroy, Mezieres, Sedan, and Longwy, 'are too badly fortified to be considered as a 'respectable barrier.

"'We shall conclude this memorial by ob- 'serving, that, considering the importance of 'Maestricht, in case of a rupture with the em- 'peror, and of an alliance with the Dutch, it is 'absolutely necessary to insist on establishing 'in that place, which ought to be well pro- 'vided, a French garrison, commanded by an 'officer of approved abilities and courage.'"

Supplement.

" ' In the preceding memorial we have shown ' the necessity of preventing Maestricht from ' falling, with its fortifications, into the hands ' of the emperor. The object of this supple- ' ment is to prove, that France is deeply in- ' terested in not suffering that place to be given ' up to the Austrian monarch.

" ' The reasons we have already exhibited ' demonstrate, that if the emperor be not in ' possession of Maestricht, he cannot carry on ' the war in the Low Countries. Some persons ' suppose, that if the place were demolished, ' there would be no inconvenience in ceding to ' him the territory. This opinion is ill founded.

" ' It is surely of no other importance to ' France that Maestricht remain in its present ' state, than because the city prevents the em- ' peror from employing his forces between the ' Meuse and the sea. If the fortifications were ' razed, we do not deny that the place would ' be less useful to Austria than if it were ceded ' to him as it is; but the emperor would, never- ' theless, reap the greatest advantages from it. ' First, the place could not keep a curb on his ' projects; secondly, he would be master of ' the navigation of the Meuse from Namur to

'below Grave; thirdly, he might, without in-
'convenience, occupy the positions on the left
'bank of the river, which before was impossi-
'ble; fourthly, he would have an uninterrupted
'communication with the Rhine and the elec-
'torate of Cologne; and, fifthly, it would cut
'off the only good communication which exists
'by land between France and Holland. This
'is sufficient to demonstrate, that Maestricht
'remaining as it now is, in the hands of the
'Dutch, prevents the emperor from falling on
'the Low Countries; and if that place be ceded
'to him either fortified or demolished, nothing
'can hinder him from penetrating by the left
'bank of the Meuse, maintaining himself there,
'and acting as he would wish, either against
'the frontier of the United Provinces, or
'against that of France.'"

We have discovered among the king's papers, that a few months after the decision on Maestricht, the count de Grimoard was sent into Holland, under pretext of soliciting the rank of *major-general* in the service of the States-General, but, in reality, to negotiate the adoption of a project which he had formed, and which consisted in uniting the naval forces of France and the republic, as well as bodies

of troops belonging to the two nations, to overturn the English power in India, and consequently in Europe. The king, the count de Vergennes, the marshal de Castries, in quality of minister of the marine, the marquis of Bouillé, in quality of general intended to command the expedition, and the negotiator, were the only persons in the secret. In less than two months, M. de Grimoard, even without the knowledge of the French embassador at the Hague, concerted a plan of convention with the principal members of the Dutch government, in virtue of which the republic was to furnish a third of the troops, vessels, and money necessary for the enterprise, and grant us the co-possession of the Cape of Good Hope, and the port of Trincomalé in the island of Ceylon, till after its execution. Divers papers relate, that a disagreement between marshal de Castries and M. de Vergennes prevented this equally glorious and salutary project from being carried into effect; and the change of circumstances, together with the different kinds of troubles into which France has since fallen, caused it entirely to fall to the ground: but count Grimoard's services were no less esteemed by Lewis XVI., for he wrote on one of his notes, "This is a man fit for the administration, or for some considerable command."

CHAP. VI.

Ministerial Revolutions at London before the definitive Peace of 1783.—Disgrace of Lord North—Recapitulation of the Events which happened under his Administration.—Ephemeral Administration of Rockingham and Fox.—The Independence of America is acknowledged.—Administration of Shelburne—Four Factions at London on that Account.—Fox and North re-established in the Administration—Their Disgrace.—William Pitt made Prime-minister.—Fox goes out of Office.—Parliamentary Coalition against Mr. Pitt.—Dissolution of the British Parliament.—The Peace.—Erection of a Statue to Lewis XVI. at Philadelphia.

LORD North, prime-minister of George III. had supported the burden of government for the space of twelve years. He had helped to form the character of the king of England in the season of adolescence, and maintained a great ascendency over his mind ever since the year 1770, when he enjoyed the first place in the monarch's councils. England will long have reason to lament his administration. That nation had passed, in the space of fourteen years, from the highest pitch of her prosperity, in 1763, to the distress of 1778. Lord North had given France time to create a formidable navy, and

the insurgents, whom he despised, had formed the design of declaring hostilities against the court of London. Under his administration, Holland, although devoted by the stadtholder to George III., declared against England; and Spain united herself to the maritime coalition.

France, on her part, committed some glaring faults. If, at the time of the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, this combined force, instead of menacing a descent on England, had effected it, they might have given a mortal blow to that terrified country. Our fleet was then off Plymouth, which was without defence; and admiral Cordova anxiously desired to distinguish himself; but count d'Orvilliers, in steering away, was either a most arrant coward, or he obeyed too punctually the orders of the cabinet of Versailles, then totally unacquainted with the advantages of his situation.

During that war, Europe was gratified with a sight of the two grand maritime powers at implacable variance with each other; and she seized the opportunity to form the famous armed neutrality of the north, which had been imagined in France.

In this state of distress, England began to feel how much she had alienated the minds of other nations. All were exasperated at her proceed-

ings; on the continent she had not one ally; and the whole maritime force of Europe was either directly or indirectly united against her. What was still more afflicting for that haughty nation, by arming against the Americans, she plunged the dagger into her own bosom.

France, emerging from the state of compression in which the court of London had held her ever since the year 1763, stirring up all Europe against Great-Britain, seeking enemies to oppose her in every quarter, or, what was equally disagreeable to her pride, establishing an armed neutrality in the north, could not expect to enjoy above a few years this great superiority. England, triumphant in 1763, and chastised in 1783, was meditating against France the most terrible vengeance. In the mean time the unfortunate administration of lord North, disgusting every party, and exciting general dissatisfaction, that minister, to calm the public mind, resigned his office on the 22d of March 1782.

The marquis of Rockingham succeeded him, and was assisted by lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox, appointed secretaries of state. The former sounded privately the cabinet of Versailles, and the latter the congress of Philadelphia, for the pacification of which they laid the first foundation. Rockingham died two months after he came into office, and the principal employment

was then given to Shelburne. Fox retired dissatisfied; and Shelburne prevailed upon the king to nominate lord Grenville, and a young man twenty-three years of age, born to be the scourge of France as well as of his own country: I mean William Pitt, son of the earl of Chatham, brought up by his father in profound knowledge, and with a hatred to Frenchmen that nothing, they say, will ever be able to appease. Thus lord Shelburne retained the principal authority. He made use of it to acknowledge the independence of America, as a preliminary of the future pacification of Europe; while Fox flew back to the bench of opposition, and united with his enemy lord North. The determination to acknowledge the independence of America diminishing the enemies of Great-Britain, deprived France of all pretext for carrying on the war, and united the British forces against us.

Europe is indebted to lord Shelburne for the signing of the preliminaries of peace, on the 20th day of January 1783. Fox, and the other ministers out of office, were vociferous against that nobleman, who held the reins of government, and who voluntarily resigned them.

The English government was in a kind of crisis similar to what it always feels before it thinks of peace. Four different parties, which had been smothered during the war, now de-

veloped their respective animosities, at the moment Great-Britain seemed to be reconciled to us.

The first faction was headed by the duke of Portland, attached to the Hanoverian succession, and a descendant of the party that established the reigning family on the ruins of the house of Stuart. Fox, Burke, and about a hundred of the house of commons, were united to him.

The leader of the second was lord North, a partisan of the English and some of the Scotch tories. He was supported by the dukes of Newcastle and Northumberland, lord Stormont, &c., and about a hundred and twenty members of the house of commons.

The third was conducted by the duke of Bedford. Lord Gower was attached to him, and about sixty of the commons.

The last was that of Shelburne, formed ten years before in the house of lords. It was composed of Stanhope, Chatham, Abingdon, and about sixty members of the lower house.

Such was the relative situation of the factions which embarrassed the government, and prevented it, during several months, from thinking either of peace or negotiation. Mr. Pitt was sounded, to find if he would accept the difficult employment of prime-minister. He

refused it. Peace and war were equally inconvenient; but particularly peace, attended with such disgraceful consequences to Great-Britain.

In this critical situation, lord North and Mr. Fox, after the most violent debates, and the most expressive opposition in their principles and opinions, were brought to a reconciliation.

The duke of Portland was placed at the head of the administration, and his majesty recalled Mr. Fox and lord North. The latter, after having abdicated the principal place, accepted of a secondary one; Mr. Pitt again joined the opposition, and was shortly after followed by Fox, on account of the debate relating to the affairs of the East-India Company.

At this time Mr. Pitt definitively accepted the office of first lord of the treasury, which he resigns at the moment this work is in the press*. That minister's *début* was attended

* The following is an exact list of the British prime-ministers during the reign of George III., and the time of their going out of the administration.

The duke of Newcastle - - - - -	May	1762
Lord Bute - - - - - - - - -	April	1763
Honourable George Grenville - - -	July	1765
Marquis of Rockingham, 1st administration,	August	1765
Duke of Grafton - - - - - - -	January	1770
Lord North - - - - - - - - - - - -		1782

Rockingham a second time prime-minister during two months.

Lord

with troubles; and the majority of the two houses of parliament not appearing in his favour, he replied to all their arguments by dissolving them.

The peace of 1783 exhibited to the world a new spectacle, that of a people emerging from oppression to a state of rational liberty, which they have known how to preserve. History will describe them as a model of courage and energy in war, of prudence and virtue in time of peace; and Washington, their general and first magistrate, will hold a place among the heroes and eminent characters of antiquity. Disgusted with the crimes of our revolution, America, for a moment, forgot that she owed her liberty and independence to France; but, under the influence of a more tranquil government and milder institutions, we have seen her renew the bonds which unite the two nations.

That country can never forget her obligations to Lewis XVI. her benefactor. Congress voted a statue to that king at Philadelphia, with the following inscription, which I received from

Lord Shelburne during two months.

Duke of Portland for the same term.

Honourable William Pitt, from 1783 to 1801, author of the French revolution and re-actions, and permanent minister in England during the rise and fall in France of the ancient *régime*, of the constitutional government, and that of the girondists, montagnards, thermidorians, and of the directory.

Mr. Franklin. It is probably the only statue and inscription, remaining in its proper place, to the honour of that monarch, whose strange destiny was such, that the establishment of a republic in America raised edifices to his memory, which the institution of another republic in France has overturned.

POST DEUM
Diligenda et servanda est libertas,
Maximis empta laboribus,
Humanique sanguinis flumine irrigata
Per imminentia belli pericula
Juvante
Optimo Galliarum principe, rege
LUDOVICO XVI.
Hanc statuam principi augustissimo
Consecravit.
Et æternam pretiosamque beneficii
Memoriam
Grata reipublicæ veneratio
Ultimis tradit nepotibus.

CHAP. VII.

Regulations of the Month of May 1781, *and of the Month of January* 1786, *on the Conditions required for Admission to the Rank of Officers.—Historical Memorial of Count Grimoard on the Presentations at Court—Discontent which these Institutions occasioned.*

LEWIS XV., by adopting in the month of April, 1760, a regulation of court honours, did not foresee, that the exclusive advantages he conferred on the first class of nobility were humiliating to the second order and *tiers-état*, and consequently laid the foundation of his grandson's misfortunes. Lewis XVI. himself, by approving, during the American war, of another regulation, for the exclusion of commoners from the rank of officers, did not consider that he was alienating the richest talents and merit of the greatest part of the nation, and fomenting the revolution, which terminated, a few years after that regulation, in the destruction of the nobility and their privileges, the royal family, and the regal authority. The king, however, preserved, among his papers, a me-

morial written by count Grimoard, which had made a particular impression on his mind; for he had written these words in the margin: "Some extremely wise ideas, to be considered of." He nevertheless neglected, on this occasion, the impulse of conviction. It was his character and fate to perceive and know what was good, without possessing sufficient resolution to put it in execution. Count Grimoard's memorial, which I shall insert at full length, proves, that the monarch neither wanted council nor advice. Enlightened Frenchmen, and *French citizens*, had, at different times, given him wise and provident information, as the following memorial will prove; but the court was plunged into a state of torpor, which may be called nullity of character, that must bring any nation to ruin. This memorial, adding to examples already given, is well calculated to preserve the remembrance of the mode practised by government, in recruiting courtiers and military and naval officers. It is thus entitled in the original: *Memorial on the Inconveniences which the Regulation relative to Presentations at Court, and the Proofs of Nobility required for Admission into the Service, have produced in the Kingdom in general, and among the Military in particular.*—In the margin was inserted (*October* 1788.)

" During the reign of Lewis XIV., and greatest part of that of Lewis XV., few families were admitted at court but such as were employed in it, those whose high nobility had made it habitual, and the members of the administration. A few gentlemen, of a less distinguished class, were sometimes admitted, when any important services had rendered them worthy of that honour. The court of our monarch was never more brilliant than at the two epochs we have just mentioned.

" In the winter of 1759—60, more ladies than ordinary had begged to be presented. M. le Duc, since marshal de Duras, one of the first gentlemen of the bed-chamber, wearied by these accumulated solicitations, endeavoured to put a stop to them, by persuading the king to make the following regulation, the 17th of April 1760.

" ' That, in future, no man shall be admitted ' at court, or have the privilege of presenting his ' wife, without previously producing, before the ' genealogist of the king's orders, three titles to ' each of his family's degrees; such as contracts ' of marriage, will, inheritance, guardianship, ' donation, &c., by which filiation shall be clearly ' established from the year 1400; at the same ' time, prohibiting the said genealogist from ' acknowledging any decrees of his majesty's ' council or superior courts, or any decisions

'of his different commissaries, at the time of his 'researches into the titles of nobility in the 'kingdom; and to receive no other than the 'original family pedigree, on any consideration. 'And, according to the example of other kings, 'his majesty's predecessors, not to grant the 'honour of presentation to any ladies but those 'who are wives of persons descended from a 'noble race, his majesty also enjoins his genea-'logist not to deliver any certificate, if he find 'that the nobility they wish to prove be de-'rived from the exercise of civil or other similar 'offices, or by patents of nobility, excepting, 'nevertheless, in the latter case, those to whom 'such patents may have been granted for 'signal services rendered to the state; and he 'may also except those who hold offices under 'the crown, or in the household, and the male 'descendants of knights of any of the orders, 'who shall be only obliged to prove their de-'scent from those on whom such orders had 'been conferred.'

"This regulation was put in force. They thought only of preventing temporary embarrassments, without calculating the dangerous consequences it must occasion in the end. It is astonishing, that his majesty should declare: 1st, That none should be admitted as qualified titles which had been 'decreed by his council,

by the superior courts, or by the decisions of his commissaries,' authorities established by the monarch himself for the legal verification of the rank of citizens. 2dly, That, according to the example of his predecessors, not to grant the honour of presentation to any ladies but those who are wives to persons descended from a noble race; at the same time, that this assertion is authentically contradicted by many incontestable historical monuments, particularly by the printed description of *fêtes* given in 1688 by Lewis XIV.; in which we find, at that proud monarch's own table, seated between mesdemoiselles d'Angoulême and the duchess de Brissac, mesdames Aubry, Bailleul, Bonnelle, Bordeaux, and marshal de Grancey by the side of madames Fieubet and des Hameaux; marshal de l'Hôpital's lady separated from the countess of Louvigny-Grammont by the wife of the lieutenant of the police; madame Marré on the right side of the duchess de Némours; and, lastly, the wife of the president Tubeuf, and madame Tambonneau, mixed with the duchess of Richemont, the duchess of Vallière, mistress to the king, and the marchioness de la Trousse. The greatest part of the ladies we have just mentioned were not even of the magistracy, but merely of the high finance. 3dly, That at the very instant the regulation was made, they pro-

vide exceptions in favour of those who hold offices under the crown and the king's household, or may be descended from knights of his orders. These numerous exceptions became a real motive of humiliationfor those who were its objects; at the same time it announced, that the new law would be violated, as the sequel has frequently proved, every time they might conceive it necessary; or, that intrigue and protection would be able to break down the frail barrier established by government. But it is necessary to expose the afflicting inconveniences it has produced throughout the kingdom, as well as in the army; for it has been one of the principal causes of the decadence of our military establishment.

" Before the regulation of 1760, many gentlemen, whose titles went as far back as the year 1400, and even farther, had never had an idea of visiting the court: they lived on their estates, expended their revenues, and thus contributed to the prosperity of the country. If they had several male children, the youngest were put into his majesty's service; and if they obtained the rank of captain of infantry, cavalry, or dragoons, it was thought sufficiently honourable and satisfactory; they recruited on their own country, and raised men born on their parents' estates, or in the neighbourhood; they knew

and cherished them, and never were there better, or more affectionate troops, to their officers. While the latter remained in the service, or when they quitted it, they never teased the war department, as is customary at the present day, by their pretensions and demands, almost always unjust, or at least exaggerated, and frequently by intrigues of office or by protectors, whose influence a minister cannot always resist, without exposing himself to continual disturbances and cavilings, and risking his importance at court.

" Since the regulation, the whole of the nobility have been attacked by a genealogical fever; and every gentleman, whose true or false titles reach to 1400, has wished to present his wife, and attend the retinue of the king; therefore it is evident, that a measure whose object was to prevent the court from being too numerous, has produced a contrary effect, by bringing a prodigious number of nobles to it, whose presence was not necessary, and who never would have had any idea of going there, had it not been for the foregoing inconsiderate law; besides, the court of our kings will always be magnificent, their officers will be ever sufficient for the service of the regal presence and the splendor of the throne, and the capital will never be without inhabitants; but the country

may be in want of proprietaries to preserve its prosperity.

"If they had admitted to the honour of the court only noblemen of ancient extraction, rigorously verified, the evil would not have been so great; but the exceptions have increased it. Many have obtained by intrigue, and sometimes by money, a distinction which they could not have acquired by right; others have practised a robbery still more glaring and scandalous, by causing false titles to be fabricated, to serve instead of those they did not possess; in short, the ancient class of nobility is increased, and daily increase, excessively, either by usurpations of the prerogatives of the superior nobles, by those who are inferior, or else by *titro-mania*. In the provinces we find a multitude of gentlemen, where the vanity of giving their children the self-importance of lords of the court, makes them neglect all rural and domestic economy, and dissipate a part of their patrimony in genealogical researches, which, commonly being very expensive, instead of affording any solid advantage, are frequently the ruin of a whole family.

"The regulation of 1760 presents such manifest absurdities and injustice, that it is surprising how it can have escaped its author's observation. It admits to the honours of the court whoever can prove his nobility from 1400,

by means of three titles by degree or generation; and it excludes every gentleman whose origin is derived still farther back, but whose ancestors, or himself, may have had the misfortune accidentally to lose their titles, recently, or during the civil wars that have torn the kingdom at divers times, from the reign of Charles VI. to the minority of Lewis XIV. inclusive, or who may not have been able to recover above one or two acts upon several degrees.

"Besides, is it just, or even reasonable, 1st, to present those whose parchments prove their origin as far back as 1400, and to exclude others who can go no farther than 1403, or 1404? 2dly, to trust the fate, existence, and reputation of families, to the decision of a single genealogist, who may neither be incorruptible, nor exempt from passions, whose actions are never censured, and who decides, as he pleases, definitively, and without appeal?

"The court is peopled by a multitude of new courtiers, who by leaving the country, to establish themselves at Paris, have produced the double inconvenience of contributing to the desolation of the country, and to the superabundant increase of population in the metropolis, as well by their families as by the number of their domestics, to the prejudice of agriculture, and the recruiting of the army, which is become

more difficult than formerly, because every one wishes to have a great number of spruce lackeys, because the class of men best adapted to carry arms is drained or enervated by domestic servitude, and because the necessity of filling up the regiments obliges them to enlist almost indiscriminately every individual that offers, whether he be too weak or too small.

"The regulation of presentation, by engendering the rage for leaving the country, to obtain the honours and vain distinctions of the court, has also created an alarming revolution in civil and political order, by the licentious pleasures of the capital, which augment in proportion to the influx of those who are in search of them, by the increase of luxury, which, carried to the point we witness at the present day, occasions celibacy, libertinism, and even death, destructive of manners, strength of mind, and every moral virtue. These real evils have already had a visible influence on every class of citizens, and presage some dangerous convulsions at a future period, of which, it is to be feared, the extinction or loss of the nobility will not be the most afflicting result. In the mean time, they exhaust their resources in a most ridiculous manner. Fear of diminishing their consequence, by saving expenses analogous to the opinion which the vulgar generally attach

to the opulence of those they call *lords of the court*, has apparently dispersed the gradation of fortunes, and the poorest have endeavoured to vie with others of immense property; the former ruined, in a short time, by this mistaken emulation, have been obliged to intermarry in the class of finance. A commoner, having gained a fortune in the *fermes*, or in other ways of business, aspires to see his daughter honoured with the title of marchioness, countess, and lady of the court; he no longer thinks of marrying her, as formerly, to a man in his own sphere of life; but prefers giving her, from an impulse of ridiculous vanity, to a ruined gentleman of ancient extraction, or at least reputed so. Hence, young ladies of rank, (often poor, and almost always less rich than daughters of financiers,) who formerly had no difficulty in finding husbands in the provinces, now deprived of that advantage, either surcharged society with their inutility, or buried themselves in convents.

As there are fewer daughters of financiers presented than of gentlemen, a great number of the latter, having no personal means of supporting their rank, have recourse to intrigue, and demand and obtain gifts or pensions, the mass of which is increased in such a manner as to become one of the causes of embarrassment in the finances. Not satisfied to devour

thus a considerable portion of the substance of the kingdom, they aspire to the principal military employments, from a false principle, that, as they belong to the court, they ought not to remain in a subaltern situation, such as that of captain, which their ancestors, nevertheless, thought honourable; and they cannot, without injustice, refuse them regiments. The impossibility of giving to every one, and resisting this torrent, has obliged ministers to seek expedients in order to satisfy them, although convinced, that it was doing an injury to the army's subordination and discipline; for it is notorious, that courtiers never obey but with the greatest repugnance the orders of those who are not so, even if they be of superior rank. On another side, the ancient officers, who are in reality the soul of the troops, seeing themselves commanded by young men, without experience, without application, and making an ill use of their prerogatives, treat them often with contempt, become disgusted with their profession, and neglect or quit the service.

"It was at first suggested, to create second colonels, in order to find employment for a greater number of subjects; but they soon perceived, that this multitude of colonels forced them to promote such a number of general-officers, that the service was overstocked, and

consequently abused; that it was morally impossible to employ every one who wished to serve; and that the salaries, which could not be refused to many of them, absorbed, without any kind of utility, an immense quantity of money. The second colonels were therefore suppressed, and second majors created in their stead. This expedient, although better than the other, could not, however, be maintained; because it lowers too much the rank of captain, introduces a privileged class destructive of all military emulation, and, being entirely superfluous, plunges the whole in disorder, and ought to be abolished.

"The younger branches of presented families who embrace the ecclesiastical state, pretend to the first dignities of the church, as their brothers have done to those of the army; and when they return to their provinces, they affect to make use of the epithet *lord of the castle*, in a sense of derision or even abuse, and show, towards the inferior nobility and opulent commoners, such haughty and disdainful airs, that prove, to strict observers, the rules of presentation to have formed, contrary to the intention of government, on one part, an aristocracy so much the more real, that those who belong to this new intermediary class between the nation and the sovereign, exclusively absorb the

principal employments and distinctions; and, on the other, a numerous discontented party among the inferior nobility, the middle class of clergy, and the commoners of good education and easy fortune. It is much to be feared, that this disposition of the greatest number will lead to fatal divisions between the different orders, at the next meeting of the states-general.

"It would have been less absurd to follow tacitly the mode of presentation adopted in 1760, instead of making another regulation that cannot be put in practice at the present day without danger; because it excludes a great number of individuals, and incenses them against the court. The dignity of the throne undoubtedly requires that it should not be surrounded by strangers recently emerged from the dust of tribunals and counting-houses; but it is very easy only to admit gentlemen of suitable nobility, recommended by the public voice, which is the most impartial and most incorruptible genealogist; but of what consequence is it that their titles should be exactly as ancient as 1400? Lewis XIV., who was better acquainted with the art of governing a nation and giving splendor to his court than any other sovereign, had too much penetration to think that proofs of nobility would accomplish those objects, and depended more on merit than birth; besides, the

state of the finances formerly leaving the king few pecuniary recompences to dispose of, it was his interest to reserve that of presentation for distinguished services alone, without making it hereditary. It appears, at the same time, necessary to dispel the want of connexion between the possibility, in proving four degrees of nobility, being knights of the different orders, one of the greatest marks of distinction to which an individual can aspire, and the impossibility of attending the king's levees without having proved nine or ten generations. Germany, by its feodal government, less practicable than ever it was in France, is the only country in Europe which requires such far-fetched genealogies. The numerous chapters into which they admit both men and women, alone produce this passion for heraldry, and are, besides, the only resource of a multitude of nobles as poor as they are ancient; but, at the same time, birth has not the least influence in the military profession, where nothing is wanted but courage and talents. We observe even princes of the empire begin their career with the rank of an ensign, and finish it in that of a colonel, or perhaps a less elevated situation.

"In the greatest part of Europe they have a better idea of nobility than in France; and who-

ever possesses four or five degrees, is adjudged capable of holding the most important employments, if his merit be adequate thereto. Even in England, an individual nobleman enjoys no particular privilege in political order. Peerage indeed procures some advantages, not on account of birth, but as it forms an essential branch of the constitution; that is to say, a true hereditary magistracy. Notwithstanding, a peer will be more respected by his talents than by the pre-eminence of extraction.

"The king himself has sometimes expressed how disagreeable a crowd of presented people were to him; he has been heard frequently to complain of interruption, either in his own apartments or on hunting parties, by a multitude of persons whom he neither knew nor wished to know. His majesty may also remember having refused to permit the presentation of some gentlemen who had produced the necessary certificate from the genealogist: and, on more than one occasion, he has thought proper to suffer persons to be presented who have not produced such certificates: whence it results, that the regulation of 1760 is really inconsistent and illusory. On another consideration, the abuses we have above indicated are too glaring, too impolitic, and too troublesome, in every respect, to admit of any delay in accele-

rating their destruction; for it is particularly evident, that we cannot establish a good military constitution in France so long as the actual mode of presentation exists. We conceive it, therefore, indispensable, that the king should declare null and void the regulation of April 17, 1760.

"It is no less important to remedy the evil which has been occasioned, and is now daily occasioned, both in the army and navy, by the decisions and even the ordinances which exclude from the service those who, not being children of knights of St. Lewis, could not produce the necessary proofs of nobility.

"On the 22d of May, 1781, by the proposition of the marquis, afterwards marshal Ségur, then minister of war, the king decided:

"'That all subjects proposed to be nominated to sub-lieutenancies in French regiments of infantry, cavalry, light-horse, dragoons, or horse-chasseurs, shall be obliged to produce the same testimonials as those who are presented to his majesty, in order to be admitted and instructed in his royal military school; and that they shall not be admitted, unless they be sons of knights of St. Lewis, without they produce a certificate from the sieur Chérin, genealogist of the orders, to whom they shall remit their original titles, proving four degrees of nobility.'

"Marquis, afterwards marshal de Castries, minister of marine, compelled by the foregoing resolution, confined himself to making a proposal to the king, to insert in his ordinance of the 18th of August 1781, relating to the company of gentlemen-cadets of the colonial troops, the third article, running thus:

"'His majesty will nominate to situations of gentlemen-cadets only subjects of fifteen to twenty years of age, proving three degrees of nobility, or sons of officers decorated with the cross of St. Lewis, killed or dead of their wounds in the service. The said gentleman-cadets shall be obliged to produce their certificate of baptism, and attestations of their father's service; which papers shall be addressed, in regular order, to the sieur Chérin, genealogist of the king's orders, who shall be charged with the verification of the titles.'

"M. de Castries wisely avoided exacting proofs of nobility for admission into the royal navy, until he was forced to it by the outcries of that body, in which nothing was requisite but great skill and valour; they were fearful, undoubtedly, of being less considered than the army: he therefore engaged the king to ordain as follows, by the tenth article of the 1st of January 1786, relating to the navy:

"'No young men shall be admitted into this

corps, but those who can exhibit the same proofs of nobility as are required for the army; that is to say, four degrees.'

"Such laws, besides annihilating emulation, and rendering every family, which finds itself excluded, dissatisfied, must become the more useless, as it is necessary to dispense with them in time of war, and thereby abase government in the public opinion. Reflexion and information on past events would have prevented the king's ministers from falling into these embarrassments, the ill effects of which it will be difficult, at the present day, to efface.

"During the reign of Lewis XIV., both nobles and commoners were admitted into the service without distinction; but the numerous reforms, and the peace which followed the Spanish war of succession, soon rendered military employments so scarce, that, from the commencement of the regency, they felt the necessity and justice of granting the preference to those nobles, who not being able, like commoners, to employ themselves in lucrative professions, without derogating from their rank, had, in reality, no means of subsistence but in his majesty's service. They ordered, in consequence, that every individual aspiring to the service, whose father had not been, or should not be proposed by a distinguished military character,

could not be received therein, without producing an attestation of nobility, signed by three or four noblemen. This measure, by which they tacitly derogated when circumstances required it, displeased no one, and existed till May 1781, when M. de Ségur annulled it in too trifling a manner. Count St. Germain, one of that minister's predecessors, to whom the same arrangement was proposed, at first thought of adopting it; but it was represented to him, that, before he made a regulation, he ought to examine, 1st, if it was useful, and did not offer more inconveniences than advantages; 2dly, if it was just, and could always be put in execution, and subsist; because, on a contrary supposition, it should be renounced. St. Germain judged it necessary to clear up the matter before he decided on it; and, searching among the archives of his department, found, that war having commenced at the end of the year 1733, the ancient officers, who only remained in the service, because peace did not require on their part any fatigue, and finding themselves incapable to support that of war, gave in their resignations in so great a number, that they could not find a sufficiency of nobles to fill up the vacant places, although France, at that time, had no more than 205,372 men on foot, exclusive of the militia. This scarcity of officers obliged M. d'Anger-

villiers, minister of war, at the beginning of the year 1734, to write to the intendants of the provinces, to excite the commoners of their respective districts, who had given their children an education, and wished to place them in the army, to ask for employment, and it would be granted. After the peace of 1738, that of 1748, and that of 1763, they re-established, in a prudent and quiet manner, the measure adopted under the regency in favour of noblemen.

" From what we have observed, it evidently results, 1st, that the French nobility are not sufficiently numerous alone to fill up every employment in the army, when it may exceed 150,000 men, exclusive of the militia, or when war may occasion a great consumption of officers, as in 1733, 1741, and 1757; 2dly, that this reason renders every arrangement absurd which tends formally to exclude commoners from the service, since they may be forced to excite them to enter into it; and 3dly, that noblemen should only be preferred in time of peace, as they have no other mean of subsistence, nor any other method of passing their time. Struck with these ideas, M. St. Germain rejected the project which Ségur blindly adapted, without the least examination: his inconsiderate decision, also, of May 22, 1781, and all of the same nature which came after them,

have, together, humiliated and incensed, without reason, (but not without risking the royal authority and public tranquillity, particularly in the present situation of affairs) the middling order who cannot prove four degrees of nobility, and the class of commoners who lived on their fortune.

"The preceding reasons are sufficiently imperative to induce the king to abrogate, 1st, the decision of the 22d of May 1781, on the admission to the army; 2dly, the third article of the ordinance of the 1st of January 1786, concerning the marine: lastly, to replace things upon the ancient footing: for it is incontestable, that the present order of things, less than ever, permit us to support arrangements contrary to the essence of our monarchy and national character, or, at least, offensive to one of the most numerous classes of citizens, now sufficiently enlightened to regard as a revolting injustice the measure of treating men in France, in military situations, as horses are treated in Arabia, where they are reputed almost of no value, unless the seller can prove their pedigree well attested for several generations."

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Progress of the Human Understanding in Literature, Arts, and Sciences, under the Reign of Lewis XVI.—Philosophy obtains the Pre-eminence over all other Kinds of Knowledge.—That of Voltaire was destructive of religious and social Opinions—That of Rousseau tended to establish new political Institutions—Ephemeral Reign of their Doctrine.—Under Lewis XVI. Literature is neither the Ornament nor Support of Power.—Progress of natural Sciences.—Remarkable Inventions.

AS the French revolution is the principal product of the philosophical and metaphysical systems of the last years of the eighteenth century, posterity may wish to examine the progress of the human understanding, the leading opinions of France, and the character of the parties or factions that professed them.

Religion, under the reign of Lewis XVI., was no longer discussed in France with polemical inveteracy, as in the reigns of Lewis XIV. and Lewis XV.; and, being no more an object of sentiment, the state experienced none of those storms which formerly a bull was sufficient to produce. The Gallican church, foreseeing better than any of the other bodies, that it was

on the point of a revolution, remained quiet. Its chiefs acknowledged, in 1788 and 1789, that they had gone too far in defence of religion; from which effectively resulted, in weak minds, the dangerous idea, that it is problematic in its nature, subject to controversy, and effected by man's imagination. Thus religion, which, in former ages, had made so great a figure in France, was now calm and silent. Its ministers were become tacit observers, and in such a state of discredit, that government paid little attention to their periodical remonstrances. They often hinted to the king, by various and repeated methods, to guard against the precipice which threatened him; but the insensible monarch alienated their intentions by some insignificant answer.

The class of dauntless writers, whom the contempt of academicians and incredulous *literati* could not appal, declaimed with energy. Luneau, who had sustained a famous law-suit on the undertaking of the *Encyclopædia*, thundered incessantly against the progress of philosophy. The abbé Fontenay, in the calmness of his reason, condemned it by pacific argumentation. The abbé Aubert, to defend his cause, employed the wit which Voltaire used for its destruction. Freron was no more. Grozier, Clément, Rigoley de Juvigny, Geoffroy, and

others, inherited his spirit; and government, by prosecuting Linguet, could not perceive that it turned the shaft against itself.

All those writers professed, that philosophy is the friend and defender of the throne and religion; but the philosophy of the times was their scourge and ruin; that morals and religious ideas were the support and glory of governments; and that *exaggerated* rigour in opinion, such as that of jansenism, was a false and dangerous virtue, and the friend of revolutions and heresies. Nearly all the ex-jesuits intrepidly defended both the throne and religion.

The philosophy of the times, or rather that union of ideas destructive of all our social institutions, had obtained in France the pre-eminence over every other kind of knowledge. If assailed and persecuted, it was ever sure, by some means, to rise triumphant from its contests. The two principal potentates of the eighteenth century, Frederic and Catharine II., had ennobled it. The ingenious sarcasms of Voltaire against religion had obliged that patriarch of modern philosophy to expatriate himself; but he still triumphed, on the confines of France, over all the orders of the state, incensed against him. "You cannot destroy the Christian religion," said they to him..... "We shall see that," replied the old

man, much more animated against it in his advanced age than in his youth; and certainly, if we except his literary works, in which however we find the same spirit, this celebrated man was employed, during his whole life, in destroying, abasing, and ridiculing religious institutions.

Rousseau, on the contrary, seemed to be occupied solely in writing for the establishment of new doctrines, religious and political; but, born in a republic, which, within two centuries, has overturned every thing, and which in vain endeavours to substitute institutions equivalent to those destroyed, he proposed to the present generation nothing but illusory and dangerous alternatives. His doctrine, spread over all Europe for the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century, has not succeeded even at Geneva, though a small state, and eager for salutary institutions. In France, after having been an object of speculation to many people of probity, who sincerely desired to see their country virtuous, flourishing, free, and happy, it is become our scourge. Transport the doctrine of Rousseau, the Utopia of Thomas More, and the World of Plato, into the most vicious and abandoned states of Europe, and these doctrines would become, as in France, their misery and destruction.

The effect of the two attacks upon ancient

France, by Voltaire and Rousseau, the first destroying our institutions, the second proposing to us new ones, was such, that Europe and our country refused to sanction the destruction of the first and the establishments of the second. Voltaire, and the philosophers his disciples, have vainly contributed to overthrow, in the course of a few years, what our fathers held in veneration. That religion, and those gods, which you imagine ineffectual, abased, and annihilated, are again rising around us. Like a spring, which a child endeavours to stop by placing a massive obstacle on the aperture whence it flows, it finds its way, in other places, to the light of day. Before the revolution, the philosophers of the times had expressed a desire to obtain from some potentate a corner of the earth to govern in full sovereignty, according to their own systems. The reforming principles of the revolution demonstrate what would have been the character of such a government.

As to French literature, the state had forgotten, under Lewis XVI., how ably it supported authority in the former reigns. Under Lewis XIV. it had acted a more distinguished part. It had constantly been the most brilliant ornament of his time; but such was the destiny of his successor, that, deprived of the mean of inspiring his age with a taste for the sublime, and to stimulate it accordingly, French

literature degenerated to such a degree, that, about the middle of the eighteenth century, our academies consisted only of subaltern *literati*, eclipsed by the preponderance of philosophers and professors of natural sciences.

In fact, the physical sciences, as well towards the close of the reign of Lewis XV. as under his successor, have rendered the two reigns immortal in the history of man. Under these two monarchs, natural history, aided by mineral chemistry, physics, physiology in plants and animals, and medical geography, rose, as it were, from nothing.

The exploring the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, the Vosges, and the mountains of Auvergne, which, in anterior reigns, had presented only romantic views for painters, now afforded new objects of curiosity. Démaret wrote the history of ancient volcanos, the eruptions of which form a part of the soil of Auvergne. Faujas de St.-Fond wrote the history of those of Velay and Vivarais; and chemistry and physics aided him in his descriptions. Palasseau examined the organisation of the Pyrenees; he decomposed their heterogeneous masses, and found that the mountains were formed by alternate layers of slate, calcareous rocks, and others, inclining to the north and south, throughout the whole length of the chain from the Ocean to the Mediterranean, and that an immense primordial stone of granite composed its base.

Guétard wrote the history of the Upper Alps, and Besson and De Saussure those of Switzerland and Mount-Blanc, which consist of analogous materials.

The author of these Memoirs, traversing the Cevennes, the Pyrenees, and the Alps, and examining the structure of the mountains on which he was born, wrote the history of the primitive rock of granite which constitutes their foundation, the granatoïdes that rest upon it, the beds of mountains containing the first traces of animated maritime beings petrified therein, and the plains of the Rhone, the Loire, and the Seine, ruins of all the antecedent soils. He wrote the chronological history of extinguished volcanos, the eruptions and produce of which are dated from the first ages of the physical world, and from periods nearly bordering on primordial chaos. He also wrote that of later volcanos, which have retained their form, still exhibiting appearances of lava formerly fluid; and that of volcanos of a still more recent date, the conic shapes and ignivomous mouths of which are yet preserved: and, lastly, that of volcanos, the fires of which appear not to be totally extinguished, some small apertures of fixed air, and fountains of hot and ferruginous mineral water, still proceeding from the continuation of an internal decomposition. He wrote the physiology of plants that are peculiar to certain geographical situations, and cli-

mates analogous to their constitution, from the frozen summits of the Pyrenees, Cevennes, and the Alps, even to the inferior warm or burning climates of Lower Provence. All these facts prove, that if France affords five climates nearly alike in the five extensive plains of the Rhône, the Garonne, the Loire, the Seine, and the Rhine, it is manifest, that, from those lower regions, to the icy summit of the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, the Vosges, and the Alps, the degrees of climate demonstrate, that our territory offers every temperature that Europe is susceptible of. This is the principal source of the opulence and industry of the state, and of the riches and activity of its exterior commerce.

The reign of Lewis XVI. has been illustrious for discoveries and experiments in natural philosophy, which had long employed the learned of Europe. Vera invented the ingenious machine bearing his name, and which we ought to study to bring to perfection; it presents a new principle, and a secret method of raising water, adhering to a rope, to a considerable height. The brothers Montgolfier discovered the art of elevating to the clouds heavy and immense machines, with a fluid specifically lighter than that of the atmosphere; and Charles, by confining that fluid in a balloon, performed the first idea of travelling in the skies; a majestic experiment, which Blanchard

carried to such a pitch of boldness, as to set out from England, cross the sea in the region of clouds, and arrive without accident in France. Chemistry and physics were by turns employed in bringing this discovery to perfection.

The science of man acquired, in the royal medical society, new means of attaining perfection; medical geography is an art which the reign of Lewis XVI. had, as it were, instituted. Adanson, who anteriorly published his family of plants, according to their degrees of parentage, carried his maxims and observations into the general classification of the productions of nature; while La Cépède continued with success the magnificent descriptions of Buffon.

Chemistry, formed by various rival schools, was brought to perfection in France. The history of the progress of that science would be a work infinitely curious and important, which we must confess is still wanting to the republic of letters, as well as the annals of natural history.

Würtz, a physician of Strasbourg, observing the affinity and dissimilitude of natural productions, discovered the art of placing them, as it were geographically, in their relative and natural situations, in the same manner as towns and provinces are placed in their respective places in maps. He executes this idea on medicaments in so curious a manner, that

his topographical chart represents comparative views produced by the analogy of neighbourhoods, and from the approximation of substances. The author deducts from his doctrine the theory of oppositions in the productions of nature,—a theory so fruitful in new ideas, and so little thought of.

I shall not expatiate on our mechanicians, nor on the architecture of bridges, brought to perfection by Perronet, Regemorte, and others; nor on the works of Cherbourg, which Burke compared to the pyramids of Egypt; nor on our astronomers; nor on their patriarch Lalande, celebrated for his zeal, his labours, and the boldness of his anti-religious opinions; nor on the discoveries of the abbé L'Epée, continued and brought to perfection by Sicard; nor on the unfortunate voyage of Peyrouse, undertaken by the secret and direct instructions of Lewis XVI. The mention of these is sufficient to indicate, that his reign is more remarkable, as it relates to the sciences, than any which had preceded it.

The arts have not been so much respected nor so flourishing as in the reign of Lewis XIV.; neither did they succeed so well under Lewis XVI. as in the time of his predecessor. Millions, expended in the building of lodges for clerks at the barriers, announce the folly of the times, and would be monuments of the degene-

racy of our architecture, if the magnificent projects, known and preserved in the history of that art, were not sufficient proofs that our taste for justness and sublimity is not lost.

David took up the pencil, and formed his school under the reign of Lewis XVI.

The reign of popular benevolence in the present age has encouraged an establishment, that has been respected by all the furies of the revolution; I mean the free-school for drawing, instituted for artisans by M. Bachelier. If the populace, under the direction of the Chaumettes, have not burned and ravaged every production of our arts, as well as our antiquities, we are indebted for it to a taste for the sublime with which Bachelier had inspired twenty thousand young men, who had entered as workmen in his school, and had gone out artists. They will still imprint the French taste on the productions of our arts, trades, and manufactures, if government shall protect the rich proprietaries, who are the sole nourishers of arts and industry, and if the English do not introduce into our commerce a false taste for their productions, as they did after the last treaty of peace.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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